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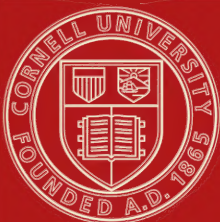
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WILLIAM BARTRAM  
INTERPRETER OF THE AMERICAN LANDSCAPE



LONDON: HUMPHREY MILFORD  
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WILLIAM BARTRAM  
INTERPRETER OF THE AMERICAN  
LANDSCAPE

BY

N. BRYLLION FAGIN

*Associate in English, The Johns Hopkins University*

BALTIMORE  
THE JOHNS HOPKINS PRESS

1933

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## PREFACE

In 1791 William Bartram, a Philadelphia botanist, published an account of his *Travels through North & South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida, the Cherokee Country, the Extensive Territories of the Muscogulges, or Creek Confederacy, and the Country of the Choctaws; Containing an Account of the Soil and Natural Productions of these Regions, together with Observations on the Manners of the Indians*. The book was promptly reprinted in England and Ireland, was translated into German, Dutch and French, and is still interesting enough to be reprinted in our own day (1928) in Mr. Mark Van Doren's *American Bookshelf*. During its long life the book has made a strong impression upon discriminating readers, and its influence upon the thought and literature of almost a century and a half is a phenomenon deserving the attention of the student of literary history. While Bartram himself claimed that he wrote his account primarily as a contribution to natural science, to furnish information on "the various works of Nature," on "whatever may contribute to our existence . . . whether it be found in the animal or vegetable kingdoms" (Introduction, p. xiii), it nevertheless has qualities that have appealed to others besides scientists. Literary men especially have been stimulated by it, and their eulogies have largely prevented the work from sinking into oblivion.

Coleridge, for example, thought it "a work of high merit every way" and drew from it, for his *Biographia Literaria*, an analogy to Wordsworth's genius. Chateaubriand borrowed from it extensively for his works depicting the American scene. Carlyle asked Emerson if he had read "Bartram's Travels" and expressed a belief that "All American libraries ought to provide themselves with that kind of book; and keep them as a kind of future *biblical* articles." More than half a century later, Professor Lane Cooper wrote to the *Nation* in an attempt to stimulate the reprinting of "Bartram's fascinating narrative," and still another quarter of a century later Professor John Livingston

Lowes, in his *Road to Xanadu*, proved that "Coleridge got his alligators from one of the most delightful books which he or anybody else ever read, William Bartram's *Travels* . . ." Finally, as recently as May, 1929, a reviewer of Mr. Van Doren's reprint of the *Travels*, writing in the *Christian Science Monitor*, enthusiastically compared Bartram with Coleridge and came to the conclusion that "There is a poetry in his [Bartram's] prose that even the master lyrist [Coleridge] does not surpass."

A work that possesses such vitality deserves careful study. What are its qualities that have drawn this acclaim? Much has been written, especially within the last quarter of a century, about Bartram as a traveler and naturalist; many comments have been made about his probable contribution to the literature of Nature and his influence upon English poetry, yet Bartram himself remains unknown—an eighteenth-century shadow—and his work remains by reputation a treasured curiosity of uncertain value. Moreover, the brief articles that have so far been written about Bartram have generally treated him as the author of one work, the *Travels*, and while it is true that this book remains his most important achievement, yet he has also published a few short essays and has left in manuscript a diary, parts of his journals, a pharmacopoeia, numerous notes, and other miscellany, besides a voluminous correspondence.

This study aims to determine with some measure of comprehensiveness the influence of Bartram on the development of nature description; to show, in the light shed by all available materials, the special combination of gifts which he brought to his observation of the American landscape, so that he came to be recognized as "the first native born American to produce a book of literary distinction upon Natural History"; and to discuss the factors outside of Bartram and his work which have contributed to his popularity among literary men, especially in Europe.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the assistance I have received in the course of this work. To Professor Gilbert Chinard, I owe a primary debt for first directing my attention to Bartram and for many helpful suggestions. Professor Raymond D. Havens

has contributed much constructive criticism, particularly in regard to the form of this study. I owe a debt of gratitude to Professor Lane Cooper of Cornell University, whose pioneer articles on Bartram have proved invaluable to me, and who generously sent me the bibliography to his sketch of Bartram in the *Dictionary of American Biography* before its publication. To the generosity of Mr. Henry Jones of New York, I owe Bartram's hitherto unknown letter to his nephew.

It is no less a pleasure to acknowledge the fine cooperation of the many librarians upon whose kindness I have often presumed; in particular I wish to mention the librarians of the Pennsylvania Historical Society, of the Bartram Memorial Library at the University of Pennsylvania, of the American Philosophical Society, of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences, of the Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania, of the Maryland Diocesan Library, and of The Johns Hopkins University Library.

N. BRYLLION FAGIN

*Baltimore, April 1933.*





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PART ONE  
LIFE AND PHILOSOPHY



## CHAPTER I

### LIFE AND CHARACTER

William Bartram was an unassuming Quaker whose life, in spite of his travel record, can hardly be called adventurous. He was born at Kingsessing, on the Schuylkill, near Philadelphia, on February 9, 1739, and he died at the same place on July 22, 1823. From the very beginning the greatest single influence that moulded his life and character was his father, John Bartram.

It is rather singular, in view of the services both father and son have rendered to early American natural science, that they should have been so unaccountably neglected by students of American cultural history. This long neglect has made the discovery of the exact facts of their lives difficult; legends have grown around them, as legends will grow around the memory of men who have been dead a century and more. The very ancestry of the Bartrams has developed a legendary tinge. Crèvecoeur, in his famous *Letters from an American Farmer*, reported John Bartram (or Bertram) as saying to his mythical Russian visitor: "Thee must know that my father was a Frenchman, he brought this piece of painting over with him; I keep it as a piece of family furniture, and as a memorial of his removal hither."<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, however, it was John Bartram's grandfather, also named John, who had removed to America, in 1683, and not from France but from Derbyshire, England.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Letter XI, p. 187, Everyman ed. "The 'letter of a Russian gentleman' in relation to a visit to John Bartram, bears intrinsic evidence of its fictitious character." ("History of John Bartram," *Meehan's Monthly*, Philadelphia, IX [1899], 96.)

<sup>2</sup> D. C. Peattie in his sketch of John Bartram (*Dictionary of American Biography*, II, 26-28) gives 1682 as the year in which John Bartram's grandfather emigrated to America. He also accepts William Bartram's article on his father in the *Philadelphia Medical and Physical Journal*, 1804, as "the best authority." Yet the article begins with "Richard Bartram, the grandfather of the subject of this sketch. . . ." and continues with other genealogical details which differ

The French element in his ancestry goes back to the Norman Conquest when two Norman brothers followed William the Conqueror to England. One settled in the north of England, the other in Scotland. The Scottish branch of the family still writes its name as "Bertram."<sup>3</sup>

John Bartram was born at Marple, near Darby, Pennsylvania, on March 23, 1699. He received a meagre country school education and devoted himself to farming. His attainments, however, were most uncommon for an ordinary farmer. Before he died, in 1777, he was recognized as a scientist of importance (the great botanist Linnaeus calling him "the greatest natural botanist in the world"<sup>4</sup>), he had established the first botanical garden in America,<sup>5</sup> had helped Benjamin Franklin to found the American Philosophical Society (his name appearing second to Franklin's on the list of founders), had been elected to membership in the Royal Societies of London and Stockholm, and had been in active correspondence with many of the principal scientists and philosophers in Europe and America. These attainments naturally enough caused a great deal of confusion in the minds of his contemporaries in their estimate of him. A farmer with a scientist's curiosity, "whose keen eye . . . pierced the husk of nature to the very kernel of life within,"<sup>6</sup> is so exceptional as to baffle classification.

Concerning the manner in which this simple farmer transformed himself into a world-famed naturalist there are many

markedly from those given by other authorities, including Peattie himself. In this study I have followed Morgan Bunting's *Genealogical Chart of the Bartram Family* (Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania).

<sup>3</sup> Letter from John Bartram to Archibald Bartram, in *Memorials of John Bartram and Humphrey Marshall*, by W. Darlington. Philadelphia, 1849.

<sup>4</sup> Charles F. Richardson, *American Literature: 1607-1885*. New York, 1887, p. 512.

<sup>5</sup> "The botanical gardens of the Rosicrucians and of Dr. Christopher Witt antedated the Bartram Garden; but in the case of the former only medicinal herbs were cultivated for the use of the brotherhood, whereas the latter garden had a rather limited influence in the advancement of botanical knowledge. So that in effect the current statement of the priority of the Bartram Garden is essentially true." Dr. William Shainline Middleton, "John Bartram, Botanist." *Scientific Monthly*, XXI (1925), 191.

<sup>6</sup> Howard Pyle, "Bartram and his Garden," *Harper's Magazine*, LX, 321.

stories. The one most commonly quoted is from Crèvecoeur's *Letters*, in which John Bartram answers Iwan Alexiowitz's question: "Pray, Mr. Bartram, when did you imbibe the first wish to cultivate the science of botany; was you regularly bred to it in Philadelphia?" To which Bartram replied:

One day I was very busy in holding my plough (for thee seest that I am but a ploughman) and being weary ran under the shade of a tree to repose myself. I cast my eyes on a *daisy*, I plucked it mechanically and viewed it with more curiosity than common country farmers are wont to do; and observed therein very many distinct parts, some perpendicular, some horizontal. *What a shame, said my mind, or something that inspired my mind, that thee shouldst have employed so many years in tilling the earth and destroying so many flowers and plants, without being acquainted with their structures and their uses!* This seeming inspiration suddenly awakened my curiosity . . . this new desire did not quit my mind; I mentioned it to my wife . . . her prudent caution did not discourage me; I thought about it continually at supper, in bed, and wherever I went. At last I could not resist the impulse; for on the fourth day of the following week, I hired a man to plough for me, and went to Philadelphia. Though I knew not what book to call for, I ingeniously told the book-seller my errand, who provided me with such as he thought best, and a Latin grammar beside. Next I applied to a neighboring schoolmaster, who in three months taught me Latin enough to understand Linnaeus. . . . Then I began to botanise all over my farm; in a little time I became acquainted with every vegetable that grew in my neighborhood; and next ventured into Maryland. . . .<sup>7</sup>

This account of a miraculous conversion has been accepted by subsequent writers on John Bartram. In an article, for instance, on the "Study of Natural Science," an anonymous writer retells this story of the plucking of the flower—without mentioning the source of his information—and concludes dramatically that ". . . in the same hour the lover of nature became a naturalist, and the spirit then awakened never slept to his latest day."<sup>8</sup>

There are facts, however, contained in the literary remains of John Bartram and his son William, that point to a more normal transition of the lover of nature into a naturalist. On May 1,

<sup>7</sup> *Letters from an American Farmer*, pp. 190, 191, 192. The italics are Crèvecoeur's.

<sup>8</sup> *The North American Review*, LXI (October, 1835), 414.

1764, John Bartram wrote to his English friend, Peter Collinson: "I had always since ten years old a great inclination to plants, and knew all that I once observed by sight . . ." <sup>9</sup> His son William testified that his father "had a very early inclination to the study of physic and surgery. He even acquired so much knowledge in the practice of the latter science, as to be useful; and, in many instances, he gave great relief to his poor neighbors. . . . It is extremely probable that as most of his medicines were derived from the vegetable kingdom, this circumstance might point out to him the necessity of, and excite a desire for, the study of botany." <sup>10</sup> This reads like a much more plausible account of John Bartram's turning to natural science. But there is more than mere plausibility to point to John Bartram's interest in medicine. His letters to Peter Collinson are full of references to fevers and epidemics in the neighborhood. A selection from these letters was published by Professor Benjamin S. Barton in his *Philadelphia Medical and Physical Journal* <sup>11</sup> under the title "Notices of the Epidemics of Pennsylvania and New Jersey, in the years 1746, 1747, 1748, and 1749." That he even attained considerable eminence in medicine is indicated by his being listed in Dr. Haller's *Bibliotheca Botanica* as "Johanes Bartram, Medicus Americanus." <sup>12</sup>

The scientific accomplishments and influence of John Bartram have been treated by Professors Youmans <sup>13</sup> and Harshberger, <sup>14</sup> by Dr. R. Hingston Fox, <sup>15</sup> and in a recent article by Dr. William Shainline Middleton. <sup>16</sup> Here only a few of his many and various labors may be cited. In 1728 he founded on the west bank of the Schuylkill River the Bartram Botanical Garden. Through

<sup>9</sup> Darlington, *Memorials*, p. 263.

<sup>10</sup> "Some Account of the Late John Bartram, of Pennsylvania." By William Bartram. *Philadelphia Medical and Physical Journal*, Vol. I, Part I, Section II, pp. 115-124.

<sup>11</sup> Vol. I, Part I (1804).

<sup>12</sup> Tom. II, p. 323. See *Philadelphia Medical and Physical Journal*, I, 117.

<sup>13</sup> W. J. Youmans, *Pioneers of Science in America*. New York, 1896.

<sup>14</sup> John W. Harshberger, *The Botanists of Philadelphia and Their Work*. Philadelphia, 1899.

<sup>15</sup> *Dr. John Fothergill and his Friends*. London, 1919.

<sup>16</sup> "John Bartram, Botanist." *The Scientific Monthly*, XXI (1925), 191-216.



the interest of James Logan and Joseph Breintnall, the latter a member of Franklin's "Junto," the aid of the English botanist and Quaker, Peter Collinson, was enlisted and an exchange of plants began between them. Dr. Middleton states that "Bartram was responsible for the introduction into England of the bush honeysuckle, fiery lilies, mountain laurel, dog-tooth violet, wild asters, gentian, hemlock, red and white cedar and sugar maple." His English friends, on the other hand, sent him, "lilacs, tulips, narcissus, roses, lilies, crocuses, gladioli, iris, snapdragons, cyclamens, poppies, and carnations, in addition to many species of fruit and shade trees."<sup>17</sup> He traveled extensively through the colonies and in 1751 published his *Observations on the Inhabitants, Climate, Soil, Rivers, Productions, Animals, and other matters worthy of notice, made by Mr. John Bartram in his travels from Pennsylvania to Onondago, Oswego, and Lake Ontario, in Canada*.<sup>18</sup> In the same year he added a preface, notes, and an appendix to Dr. Thomas Short's *Medicina Britannica*.<sup>19</sup> In 1765 he was appointed "Botanist to the King" of England, and a year later he published his *Description of East Florida, with a journal kept by John Bartram of Philadelphia, Botanist to His Majesty for the Floridas upon a journey from St. Augustine up the River St. John's, as far as the Lakes*.<sup>20</sup> His name in science is memorialized by two types of *Bartramia*, one—named by Gronovius—"a tropical plant with burr-like fruits, section of the genus *triumfetta* (tiliaceau);" the other—named by Hedwig—"a genus of acro-carpous mosses."<sup>21</sup>

It is, however, not with John Bartram's scientific accomplishments that we are concerned, but with his personality and his probable influence on his son William. The attainments of the elder Bartram threw him in contact with people who, directly

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 199.

<sup>18</sup> Printed by J. Whiston and B. White, Fleet Street, London. "To which is annex'd a Curious Account of the Cataracts at Niagara, by Mr. Peter Kalm." (See Sabin, *Dict. of Books Relating to America*.)

<sup>19</sup> Published by B. Franklin and D. Hall. Philadelphia.

<sup>20</sup> London. "The third edition, much enlarged and improved. 1769" (Duyckinck, *Cyclopaedia of American Literature*, I, 234).

<sup>21</sup> R. Hingston Fox, *op. cit.*

and indirectly, colored William's childhood. Bartram's garden, before and during the tumultuous days of the Revolution, as well as in the days that followed, was a place visited by many intellectual and otherwise notable persons: Crèvecoeur, Peter Kalm, André Michaux, Franklin, Washington, Hamilton, Jefferson, James Logan, Joseph Breintnall, Benjamin Rush, and Governor Colden of New York. In 1794, Alexander Wilson came to Philadelphia, made the acquaintance of William Bartram and spent many days in the garden, which he called Bartram's "little Paradise."<sup>22</sup> There can be no question but that the garden helped enormously to form William Bartram's life and character. Its very existence in his childhood meant much to his future development. His father was born on a farm and began life as a farmer; he was born in a botanical garden and started life as a horticulturist. The extensive correspondence of John Bartram with such persons as Linnaeus, Gronovius, Catesby, Sir Hans Sloane, Dr. Fothergill, Collinson, Queen Ulrica, William Byrd, Isham Randolph, Dr. Alexander Garden, John Ellis, George Edwards, Philip Miller, Dr. John Hope, and Professor Dillenius, could not but in some way prove an influence on the career and personality of his son. It was certainly advantageous to have a father of whom it was "believed, that there have been but two or three native Americans whose correspondence with the learned men of Europe was so extensive as that of Mr. Bartram. . . . He likewise lived in habits of intimacy and friendship, or corresponded, with most of the distinguished literary characters of that time in North-America."<sup>23</sup>

William was fourteen years old when his father took him on an exploration journey to the Catskills. When he was fifteen his father sent to Collinson some of William's drawings of natural objects. A year later Bartram informed Collinson of his intentions to "set Billy to draw all our turtles with remarks, as he has time, which is only on Seventh days in the afternoon, and First-day morning; for he is constantly kept to school or learn Latin and French." William was then attending the old

<sup>22</sup> Oberholtzer, *The Literary History of Philadelphia*, p. 140.

<sup>23</sup> Editorial (Benjamin S. Barton) in *Phila. Med. & Phys. Journal*, I, 119.

college in Philadelphia.<sup>24</sup> Very little else is known about William's education. Duyckinck states that William's tutor was Charles Thomson, "subsequently the honest and spirited republican of the old Continental Congress."<sup>25</sup> In fact, Thomson was secretary of the Continental Congress until 1789, and was thought of by John Adams as "the Sam Adams of Philadelphia, the life of the cause of liberty." Besides his contribution to the cause of American liberty, his work among the Indians endeared him to all lovers of fair-dealing. In 1756 he was adopted into the Delaware tribe, among whom he was known as the "Truth Teller,"<sup>26</sup> just as later his pupil would be adopted by Indian tribes who would lovingly call him "The Flower-Gatherer." The mention of "Billy's" drawing is important. No one can read William Bartram's *Travels* without feeling that the man had the eye and the soul of a painter. His love and perception of line and color must be traced back to his early proficiency in drawing. In spite of this talent, however, John Bartram was seriously perplexed about his son's career. "My son William," he wrote to Collinson, "is just turned sixteen. It is now time to propose some way for him to get his living by. I don't want him to be what is commonly called a gentleman. . . . I am afraid that botany and drawing will not afford him one. . . . I have designed several years to put him to a doctor, to learn physic and surgery; but that will take him from his drawing, which he takes a particular delight in."<sup>27</sup>

This reluctance to interfere with his son's natural inclinations is characteristic of John Bartram. He wanted him to learn some profession that would yield him a living, but not at the neglect of a talent which he early recognized as genuine. There is no indication that he himself was able to draw and paint; perhaps because of this he respected his son's ability all the more. His encouragement was helpful. Nor can there be any doubt that the father's own general skill with his hands influenced the son's

<sup>24</sup> "Sketch of John and William Bartram." *Popular Science Monthly*, XL (April, 1892), 833.

<sup>25</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 234.

<sup>26</sup> *Encyclopaedia Americana*, XXVI, 581.

<sup>27</sup> *Memorials*, 199.

mechanical ingenuity. The house at Kingsessing in which William was born, and which has been described in numerous articles, had been built by John Bartram himself. In a letter to Jared Eliot the pride of a skilled craftsman is unmistakable. "I had been used to split rocks to make steps, door-sills, window-frames, pig and water troughs. I have split rocks seventeen feet long, and built four houses of hewn stone, split out of the rocks with my own hands. . . ." <sup>28</sup> An example of his son's mechanical skill is a fine, well-made table preserved in the Bartram Memorial Library at the University of Pennsylvania.

In his perplexity over William's career, John Bartram turned to Benjamin Franklin for advice. The latter offered to teach the boy the printing trade, but his offer was not accepted. Franklin then suggested that William be taught engraving, and that suggestion, too, was declined. Instead William, at eighteen, was placed with a Mr. Child, a Philadelphia merchant. There are no records to indicate just what he felt and thought of himself as a merchant. Four years later, in 1761, he set up as a trader at Cape Fear, North Carolina, where his uncle William had settled when a young man. He was not successful; evidently he did not follow his father's practical advice to pay "at convenient times . . . a complaisant visit to the Governour and most of the chief persons, letting them know that thee art come into their country in the way of trade . . ." <sup>29</sup> It is improbable that young Bartram, whose "disposition was that of a rover rather than that of a steady worker . . . gentle, modest and contemplative, . . ." <sup>30</sup> would follow such advice and prove a successful trader. Hence when his father, in 1766, now almost sixty-six years old, invited his son to accompany him on a botanical expedition in the South, William did not hesitate to close his business and turn explorer. On this trip he helped his father explore the sources of the river San Juan (St. Johns), ascending the river

<sup>28</sup> "Bartram's Garden." By M. L. Dock. *Garden and Forest*, March 25, 1896, p. 122.

<sup>29</sup> Letter "To William Bartram, Marchant in Cape Fear, North Carolina." *Bartram Papers*, Vol. I. In the manuscript Division of the Pennsylvania Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>30</sup> Fox, *op. cit.*, p. 186.



nearly four hundred miles by one bank and descending by the other. The report of these explorations, with observations on the lay of the land, quality of the soil, and the vegetable and animal productions, was sent to the Board of Trade and Plantations in England, where it was ordered published "for the benefit of the new colony."

This exploration trip was fruitful to William Bartram. From his earliest childhood he had seen plants in his father's garden, but many of them were transplanted, cultivated by the skill and knowledge of his father. Now at last he saw them, and others he had never seen, growing in the woods, naturally, without the aid and direction of man. He had had an earlier opportunity to observe plants in their native habitat when his father had taken him along, in 1753, on a trip to the Catskills,<sup>31</sup> but then he had been but fourteen years old and, besides, the plants of the Catskill region are not so different from those of Pennsylvania as are those of the South. The beauty of Florida fascinated him; he refused to return home, and persuaded his father to help him establish himself as an indigo-planter on the St. Johns River. This business venture, too, proved unfortunate. A graphic picture of his pathetic condition at this time is contained in a letter to John Bartram, written on August 9, 1766, by Henry Laurens, who later became famous as President of the Continental Congress and as one of the signers of the peace treaty with England. Laurens had visited Bartram at his plantation and he thus summarized his impressions:

. . . In fact, according to my ideas, no colouring can do justice to the forlorn state of poor Billy Bartram. A gentle, mild young man, no wife, no friend, no companion, no neighbor, no human inhabitant within nine miles of him, the nearest by water, no boat to come at them, and those only common soldiers seated upon a beggarly spot of land, scant of the bare necessities, and totally void of all the comforts of life, except an inimitable degree of patience, for which he deserves a thousand times better fate; an unpleasant, unhealthy situation, six negroes, rather plagues than aids to him, of whom one is so insolent as to threaten his life, one a useless expense, one a helpless child in arms, . . .<sup>32</sup>

<sup>31</sup> *Dict. of Am. Biog.*, II, 27, gives the year of this trip as 1755; but the heading of a paper in *The Bartram Papers*, Vol. I, in John Bartram's handwriting, reads: "A Journey to the Catskill Mountains with billy 1753."

<sup>32</sup> *Memorials*, 440-441.

Within a year William returned to Kingsessing, where he went to work on a farm in the vicinity of his father's home.

In 1772 Dr. John Fothergill, a London physician and Quaker, agreed to finance a journey of botanical exploration into East and West Florida for William to undertake. Dr. Fothergill was keenly interested in natural science and, through Peter Collinson, had followed the work of both Bartrams. He had received many American specimens and had admired William's drawings. He now agreed to pay fifty pounds a year for two years and all other minor expenses of packing and shipping botanical specimens; in return William Bartram was to send him curious plants and seeds and "to draw birds, reptiles, insects and plants on the spot at a further payment."<sup>33</sup> Accordingly, in April, 1773, Bartram embarked on his Southern travels, which lasted five and not two years, and which resulted not only in "the discovery of rare and useful productions of nature, chiefly in the vegetable kingdom,"<sup>34</sup> but also in a book which was the first genuine and artistic interpretation of the American landscape and which was to fascinate Romantic poets and nature-lovers in many parts of the world. That he enjoyed his labors and at last found himself in his native element in the woods, on the rivers and lakes, and in the camps and Indian villages of the unknown regions he explored, his book amply discloses. It is even more than "the artless account of an unhurried wanderer through field and forest, who made friends with every flower and tree, every bird and insect, and whose heart was one with nature herself."<sup>35</sup> It has a tone of exultation, perhaps due to his feeling of acquired independence: for while formerly he had merely accompanied his father on exploration trips, now he was alone, a full-fledged naturalist and explorer. To a large extent, also, the tone reveals "the enthusiasm of a man still young, with an eye that nothing escapes, not without poetical imagination or philosophical vision."<sup>36</sup>

Upon his return home, in January, 1778, William found that

<sup>33</sup> Fox, *op. cit.*, 186.

<sup>34</sup> *Travels*, 1.

<sup>35</sup> Fox, *op. cit.*, 187.

<sup>36</sup> Lane Cooper, *Cambridge History of Am. Lit.*, I, 196.



his father had died some three months before, on September 22, 1777. During his five years of wandering he had written home but seldom, "even when there was a chance of sending letters, and his friends" had given "him up for lost among the hostile Indians."<sup>37</sup> The garden was inherited by William's brother John, also a botanist, who took William into partnership. William settled down and led a simple, quiet life, occupied with his scientific observations, his diary, and his correspondence. In 1782 he was offered the chair in botany at the University of Pennsylvania, but he declined on account of ill-health. In 1786 he became a member of the American Philosophical Society. The Proceedings of that organization report, under date of July 20, 1792, the receipt of a copy of "William Bartram's Travels in Georgia."<sup>38</sup> Under date of November 18, 1802, the Proceedings record: "First attempt to describe our native vines, by William Bartram."<sup>39</sup> In 1806 he was invited to accompany Alexander Wilson on an ornithological expedition down the Ohio, "from Pittsburg to the Mississippi, thence to New Orleans," which again he had to decline on account of ill-health.<sup>40</sup> Wilson, writing to President Jefferson, on February 6, 1806, expressed his disappointment that Bartram could not accompany him and thus forced him to abandon his plan. "But my venerable friend, Mr. Bartram," he states, "taking into more serious consideration his advanced age, being near seventy, and the weakness of his eyesight; and apprehensive of his inability to encounter the fatigues and privations unavoidable in so extensive a tour; having, to my extreme regret and the real loss of science, been induced to decline the journey; I . . . reluctantly abandoned the enterprise . . ."<sup>41</sup>

There were other alluring offers. The greatest, which came a few years before Alexander Wilson's proposal, seems, for some reason, to have escaped Bartram's previous biographers. It is the

<sup>37</sup> Fox, *op. cit.*, p. 187.

<sup>38</sup> *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 22<sup>a</sup>, 206.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 22<sup>a</sup>, 328.

<sup>40</sup> William B. O. Peabody, *Life of Alexander Wilson*. The Library of American Biography, conducted by Jared Sparks. New York, 1848. II, 104.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

request made by Thomas Jefferson, as President of the United States, for his services on an exploration undertaking which has become famous in American history as the Lewis and Clark Expedition. On November 30, 1803, Dr. Benjamin S. Barton wrote to Bartram inquiring if he would undertake

a voyage or journey up the Red River, one of the western branches of the Mississippi. A new expedition for explaining the waters of that river, particularly with a view to its Botanical and Zoological productions, is about to take place under the patronage of the President of the United States. Your name has been particularly mentioned by the President. . . . Send your answer by my boy.

Dr. Barton then proceeded to enumerate the advantages. Compensation would be liberal; the journey would not be fatiguing. The President's agent, Mr. Freeman, who had been authorized to find a suitable man for the expedition, was pressing for an answer and Dr. Barton urged Bartram to accept.

Come on. You are not too old. You have sufficient youth, health and strength for this journey. You will render great and new services to *Natural Science*. Remember that your venerable father continued to make botanical tours long after he had reached your age.<sup>42</sup>

Further confirmation of this offer, which Bartram was obliged to refuse, is found in a letter to Jefferson, dated at Kingsess, February 6, 1806, in which Bartram recommended Alexander Wilson for exploration in Louisiana and in which he thanked Jefferson for having thought of him (Bartram) for the voyage up the Red River.<sup>43</sup>

Bartram, however, must have continued to be active in his garden and in his studies, at least in a quiet way, for in 1812 further recognition came to him in his election to membership in the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences.<sup>44</sup> On July 22, 1823, he died from a ruptured blood-vessel of the lungs; "he had just finished writing the description of a plant, and was stepping out for a stroll in his beloved Garden."<sup>45</sup>

<sup>42</sup> *Bartram Papers*, I.

<sup>43</sup> Manuscript Division, The Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

<sup>44</sup> Notice of election in *Bartram Papers*, I.

<sup>45</sup> *Dictionary of American Biography*, II, 29.

The scientific contribution of William Bartram is of interest to natural scientists. Generally classed as a "botanist and ornithologist,"<sup>46</sup> he had a multiplicity of scientific interests. His assistance to Alexander Wilson deserves special mention. Wilson, poor and friendless, employed for a time as a school teacher at Kingessing, not far from the Bartram Garden, was befriended by Bartram and encouraged in his ornithological studies, with the result that he "was persuaded by William Bartram to undertake that splendid production, 'The American Ornithology.'"<sup>47</sup> What Bartram's interest in Wilson meant to the school teacher struggling to become an ornithologist is effectively indicated in a letter Wilson wrote to Bartram in 1805: "Accept my best wishes for your happiness; wishes as sincere as ever one human being breathed for the happiness of another. To your advice and encouragement I am indebted for these few specimens, and for all that will follow. They may yet tell posterity that I was honored with your friendship, and that to your inspiration they owe their existence."<sup>48</sup>

It is with the literary contribution of William Bartram, particularly in relation to his own age and to his influence on subsequent writers, that this study is primarily concerned. If it is true that Bartram represents "the first combination of accurate observation, aesthetic appreciation and philosophical interest in the realm of natural history literature" in America,<sup>49</sup> it is necessary to consider the various forces that produced this combination. The influence of his father has already been noted; it shaped his life and developed his character. But a larger influence that shaped the ideas of both father and son, and which is visible behind the combination of elements which Mr. Hicks finds in Bartram, must not be overlooked. It is the entire eighteenth-century movement of *sentiment de la nature*. William Bartram was, perhaps, too simple and humble an individual to

<sup>46</sup> *Encyclopaedia Americana*.

<sup>47</sup> Harshberger, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

<sup>48</sup> Peabody, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

<sup>49</sup> Philip Marshall Hicks, *The Development of the Natural History Essay in American Literature*. Doctoral Dissertation, The University of Pennsylvania, 1924, p. 23.

be consciously aware of himself as part of a world-wide intellectual movement, but there can be no doubt that his father was an active agent in that movement. A member of the American Philosophical Society, an intimate friend of Benjamin Franklin, who addressed him in his letters "My ever dear friend" and "My good and dear friend,"<sup>50</sup> John Bartram surely was acquainted with the current thought then beginning to stir in America. There is a Rousseauistic defiance in his insistence on independence of thought and action. He was religious, but his views were liberal. "Indeed," he wrote to Peter Collinson, "I have little respect to apologies and disputes about the ceremonial parts of religion, which often introduce animosities, confusion, and disorder in the mind—and sometimes body too; but, dear Peter, let us worship the one Almighty Power, . . . doing to others as we would have them do to us, if we were in their circumstances. Living in love and innocency, we may die in hope."<sup>51</sup> Above his study window he inscribed:

It is God Alone, Almyty Lord,  
The Holy One by Me Ador'd  
John Bartram 1770

and over the door of his greenhouse:

Slave to no sect, who takes no private road,  
But looks through Nature, up to Nature's God.<sup>52</sup>

These deistic sentiments led to his being, in 1758, read out of the Monthly Meeting at Darby. John Bartram, farmer or naturalist, was a man of keen intellectual interests, who "seldom sat at his meals without his book; often his victuals in one hand and his book in the other."<sup>53</sup>

Such a father could not fail to transmit to his son part of his own enthusiasm for ideas. William's work, original as it is,

<sup>50</sup> William Cabell Bruce, *Benjamin Franklin Self-Revealed*. New York, 1917, I, 334.

<sup>51</sup> Letter dated July 6, 1742. *Memorials*, p. 159. Also quoted by Middleton, "John Bartram, Botanist." *The Scientific Monthly*, XXI, 214.

<sup>52</sup> Middleton, *op. cit.*, 214.

<sup>53</sup> American Philosophical Society Pamphlet v. 1166.



echoes the philosophical temper of the century in which both father and son lived. Furthermore, if John Bartram "seemed to have been designed for the study and contemplation of Nature, and the culture of philosophy,"<sup>54</sup> his son, brought up in a home where genuine wonder about nature, man, and God was very keen, was designed for nothing else. John Bartram was "at least twenty folio pages, large paper, well filled, on the subjects of botany, fossils, husbandry, and the first creation;"<sup>55</sup> so was William Bartram, who ever acknowledged the benefits he had derived from his father. In the very first paragraph of the Introduction to his *Travels* he tells us that "From the advantages the journalist enjoyed under his father John Bartram, botanist to the king of Great-Britain, and fellow of the Royal Society, it is hoped that his labors will present new as well as useful information to the botanist and zoologist." He refers to his journey of "some years ago with my father, John Bartram," during the course of which he had observed "many subjects of natural history . . . that were interesting, and not taken notice of by any traveller."<sup>56</sup> He sails by Mount Hope, which, he informs us, was "so named by my father John Bartram."<sup>57</sup> He recalls his youth when he attended his father "on a journey to the Catskill Mountains, in the government of New York."<sup>58</sup> Towards the end of his book he prints a spontaneous tribute to his father, "the American botanist and traveller, who contributed as much if not more than any other man towards enriching the North American botanical nomenclature, as well as its natural history."<sup>59</sup>

John Bartram must again be mentioned in connection with his son's humanitarian views—those views that came to be of such momentous importance in the latter years of the eighteenth century. On the question of slavery both reflected actively the Quaker creed. John Bartram had freed his slaves, made them

<sup>54</sup> "Some Account of the late Mr. John Bartram," by William Bartram. *Phila. Med. & Phys. Journal*, I, 116.

<sup>55</sup> Benjamin Franklin to Jared Eliot, Sept. 1, 1775. Quoted by Duyckinck, *op. cit.*, I, 234.

<sup>56</sup> *Travels*, 55.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 270.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 473.

eat at his table, paid them a fair wage, and taught them to read and write. One of his negro freedmen, Harvey, acted as his steward. "Thee perhaps," Crèvecoeur quotes him as saying to his Russian visitor, "hast been surprised to see them at my table, but by elevating them to the rank of freemen, they necessarily acquire that emulation without which we ourselves should fall into debasement and profligate ways."<sup>60</sup> William Bartram seeing some Indian slaves among the Creeks delivers himself of a similar sentiment: "In observing these slaves, we behold at once, in their countenance and manners, the striking contrast betwixt a state of freedom and slavery. They are the tamest, the most abject creatures that we can possibly imagine: mild, peaceable, and tractable, they seem to have no will power to act but as directed by their masters."<sup>61</sup>

On the negro slavery question specifically, William Bartram has left an interesting document. Among his papers, on the back of a "Catalogue of American Trees, Shrubs and Herbacious Plants growing in John Bartram's Garden" are scribbled some notes for a speech or a petition. There is nothing in the document to indicate to what part of his life it belongs; on the basis of handwriting and punctuation it presumably belongs to his later years—but this is a mere conjecture. The paper reads, with some omissions:

I am about to speak to you on a subject . . . the most indispensibly deserving your serious consideration perhaps that ever hath or ever will come before you.

I am fully sensible of my inability to speak to nations on a subject of reformation of morals, being fully persuaded that it requires more than human wisdom and oratorical talents. . . . Yet . . . I find it a duty incumbent on me to declare my sentiments, and render my little talent for the good and safety of my fellow creature & citizens of the World.

Men! do you believe that the Universe . . . was made by a supreme Creator. . . . Our divine Oracles teach us to do Justice and mercy and fear God. . . . Who was it said to man do thou the same to others thou wouldst them do unto these.

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<sup>60</sup> *Letter XI*, p. 193.

<sup>61</sup> *Travels*, 186. For William Bartram's attitude towards the Indian question and Indians generally, see Chapter III.



Now Brethren, since it is plain from the above principles . . . that it is our moral conduct towards each other which constitutes true Religion. . . . It seriously behoves us to . . . consider our past & present conduct whether it accords . . . with the commands of the Universal Lord and Sovereign of this World. . . .

Ye Chiefs of this Nation whome the people have chosen and appointed as Watchmen . . . for their safety. . . . Recollect the fundamental principle, the first articles of the constitution of the United States, viz. We hold it as a sacred truth, that all men are born free, and have an equal unalienable right to Life, Liberty and property, etc.

. . . Do we not continue in a woefull predicament by suffering the Black People who are fellow citizens of our Nation to be held in perpetuall Bondage and slavery, being drag'd in chains from Africa their native Land many most of them for no crime whatever & none for any crime or harm that they have rendered us: incredible that an enlightened People as we would feign be should continue to afflict them. . . .

Ye chiefs in the National Council, do you not confess while ye sit in the Assembly that those poor illtreated People are fellow citizens. Consider God is no respecter of Persons & that the Black White Red & Yellow People are equally dear to him and under his protection and favour & that sooner or later ye must render full retribution. . . .

Americans ye do not know your own interests by keeping these inocent people in bondage against their will. . . .<sup>62</sup>

The paper ends with a prophecy of the day when these afflicted people will have full satisfaction for their oppressions.

The sentiments expressed are representative of the views held generally by Quakers, including his father, on the subject of Negro slavery. Anthony Benezet, for example, another Philadelphia Friend, published in 1766 *A Caution and Warning to Great Britain and her Colonies*:

At a time when the general rights and liberties of mankind, and the preservation of those valuable privileges transmitted to us from our ancestors, are become . . . the subjects of universal consideration, can it be an inquiry indifferent to any, how many of those who distinguish themselves as the advocates of liberty, remain insensible . . . to the treatment of thousands and tens of thousands of our fellow men who from motives of avarice, and the inexorable decree of tyrant custom, are at this very time kept in the most deplorable state of slavery, in many parts of the British Dominions? . . .

. . . They are put on board the vessels, the men being shackled with

<sup>62</sup> *Bartram Papers*, I.

irons two and two together. Reader, bring the matter home, and consider whether any situation in life can be more completely miserable than that of those distressed captives. When we reflect that each individual of this number had some tender attachment which was broken by this cruel separation; some parent or wife; . . . some infant or aged parent. . . .

. . . Do we indeed believe the truth declared in the Gospel? Are we persuaded that the threatenings, as well as the promises therein contained, will have their accomplishment? If indeed we do, must we not tremble to think what a load of guilt lies upon our nation generally and individually, so far as we in any degree abet or countenance this aggravated iniquity?<sup>63</sup>

To Benezet's words should be added those of John Bartram, as reported by Crèvecoeur:

Though our erroneous prejudices and opinions, once induced us to look upon them [Negroes] as fit only for slavery . . . yet of late, in consequence of the remonstrances of several Friends, and of the good books they have published on that subject, our society treats them very differently. With us they are now free. . . . Our society treats them now as the companions of our labours; and by this management, as well as by means of the education we have given them, they are in general become a new set of beings.<sup>64</sup>

But Crèvecoeur's report of John Bartram's words becomes even more significant in the French version of his *Letters*, which differs materially from the English version. Here John Bartram actually refers to Benezet's services to the cause of the liberation of the Negro among the Quakers. Among other things not in the English edition, Bartram is reported as saying to his visitor:

Il y a plus de quarante ans que quelques membres de notre société commencerent à les émanciper. *Antoine Benezet* publia les livres à ce sujet, & parcourut tout le Continent, en exhortant à cette action généreuse les amis; & depuis cette époque, nous avons trouvé qu'un bon exemple, des avis doux & des principes de religion, pouvoient seuls les conduire à la subordination, la sobriété & à l'amour du travail.<sup>65</sup>

Among the influences upon William Bartram that of the

<sup>63</sup> *A Library of American Literature*. Stedman and Hutchinson. II, 490-492.

<sup>64</sup> *Letters*, pp. 192-193. Crèvecoeur's visit at Bartram's took place in 1769: The French editor of the *Letters* dates the supposed Russian's letter: "Philadelphie, 12 Octobre, 1769."

<sup>65</sup> *Lettres d'un Cultivateur Américain*. A. Maestricht, chez J. E. Dufour & Phil. Roux. Imprimeurs-Libraires associés. 1785. Tome Premier, 170.

books he read must come next in importance only to the influence of his father and of Quaker ideals generally. It is not an easy matter to trace the books he read. The books which had belonged to the Bartram family and are now in the Bartram Memorial Library at the University of Pennsylvania and in the library of the Pennsylvania Historical Society<sup>68</sup> do not all show by which member of the family they were acquired. It is plausible to assume that books acquired by John Bartram were read by William Bartram. The father was a voracious reader and his letters to Collinson contain numerous requests for books, so numerous, in fact, that Collinson felt impelled at one time to hint to him that Solomon had not obtained all his wisdom from books, to which hint John Bartram replied: "I take thy advice about books very kindly,—although I love reading dearly: and I believe, if Solomon had loved women less, and books more, he would have been a wiser and a happier man than he was."<sup>67</sup>

Yet Collinson sent his American correspondent many books and he interested other European scientists in John Bartram's needs. He sent him scientific books such as Sir Hans Sloane's *Natural History of Jamaica*, and books "to replenish thy inner man,"<sup>68</sup> such as Robert Barclay's *Apology for the Quakers*. Mark Catesby sent him a copy of his *History of American Birds*; Dillenius his *History of Mosses*; Linnaeus his *Systema Naturae* and *Characteres Plantarum*; Gronovius his *Index Lapideae* and his *Flora Virginica*. Besides these volumes, some of the books in the Pennsylvania Historical Society collection bear John Bartram's signature, among them a number of books on surgery—which it is doubtful that William Bartram ever read<sup>69</sup>—and a volume of the *Spectator* papers.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>66</sup> "The Bartram Library." *The Philadelphia Public Ledger*, September 11, 1891. About one hundred volumes were donated to the Penn. Hist. Society by William Middleton Bartram, a great-great-grandson of John Bartram.

<sup>67</sup> *Memorials*, p. 119. Letter to Collinson dated May, 1738.

<sup>68</sup> *Memorials*, p. 153. Letter from Collinson dated March 3, 1741-2.

<sup>69</sup> "He longs to be with thee; but it is more for the sake of Botany than Physic or Surgery, neither of which he seems to have any delight in. I have several books of both; but can't persuade him to read a page in either. Botany and drawing are his delight. . . ." Letter of John Bartram to Dr. Alexander Garden, Charleston, S. C., March 14, 1756. *Memorials*, p. 392.

<sup>70</sup> Vol. VII. Glasgow, 1767.

Volumes that can be ascribed definitely to William Bartram's possession, because of his signature upon them, are several Latin books, Buffon's *Natural History*,<sup>71</sup> an *Essay* by Benjamin Rush (1798), *Phytologia or the Philosophy of Agriculture and Gardening* by Erasmus Darwin (1800), *Philosophy of Natural History* by William Smellie, and a pamphlet on education in Pennsylvania (1759) by Benjamin Franklin. Other works belonging to the Bartram family, acquired for the most part after the death of John Bartram, are Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on Virginia* (Paris, 1783), John Woolman's *Journal* (1775), Erasmus Darwin's *Botanic Garden* (first American ed., 1798), Ramsay's *Travels of Cyrus* (1796. In French and English), Hume's *History of England* (1763), Aristotle's *Works* (1813), Pope's *Moral Essays* (1751), Sir John Hawkin's *Life of Samuel Johnson* (1787), and William Hayley's *Life of William Cowper* (1805).

That William Bartram had read these books and many others is quite clear. Echoes of the thoughts and diction of their authors are to be found everywhere in his works. It is impossible, of course, to trace a writer's unconscious absorption of other authors, but it is safe to assume that wherever a definite reference is made to a particular author or work an influence is indicated. His scientific indebtedness to such men as George Edwards and Mark Catesby is obvious;<sup>72</sup> and so is the indebtedness he shared with all botanists of his time to the "great Naturalist and Philosopher Linnaeus."<sup>73</sup> Buffon's ideas on

<sup>71</sup> Gift from Benjamin S. Barton (His letter to William Bartram, dated September 20, 1791, in *Bartram Papers*, I).

<sup>72</sup> "There is a good . . . description of him (the land tortoise) in G. Edwards's Gl. Nat. Hist. II, 205" (*Travels*, 281). "Catesby has said very little on this curious subject [bird migration]; but Edwards more, . . ." (*Ibid.*, 284). ". . . a tribe of birds . . . to which Edwards has given the name of manakin" (*Ibid.*, 300). "Catesby, in his history of Carolina, speaking of the cat-bird . . . says, . . ." (*Ibid.*, 299). ". . . a species of Robinia new to me, though perhaps the same as figured and slightly described by Catesby in his Nat. Hist. Carol." (*Ibid.*, 335).

<sup>73</sup> William Bartram's lengthy dissertation on God, Man, Nature, etc., in the *Bartram Papers*, I. There is nothing to indicate whether the manuscript was intended as a letter to someone or whether it is the rough draft of a still longer



nature impressed him. He believed that Buffon, with whom he was not in agreement, had nevertheless "sufficiently established a truly wonderful Instinct in animals . . ." <sup>74</sup> His own account of the Creek Confederacy agrees, he informs us, with that of "monsieur Duprat." The story of these Indians "concerning their country and people, . . . the progress of their migration, &c. is very similar to that celebrated historian's account of the Natches." <sup>75</sup>

Of general cultural influences upon him, the classics and the writers of the eighteenth century deserve special mention. Classical references and analogies come to him spontaneously, indicating a complete assimilation. Speaking of the Snake Bird he remarks: "I doubt not but if this bird had been an inhabitant of the Tiber in Ovid's days, it would have furnished him a subject for some beautiful and entertaining metamorphoses." <sup>76</sup> The "enchanting Vale of Keowe" reminds him of the "Fields of Pharsalia or the Vale of Tempe." <sup>77</sup> Ruminating upon the sin of dissimulation he finds some extenuation for the "dissimulation practiced by the wife of Ulysses." He "allows," however, that "there was more Heroism in the virtue of the Wife Lucretia. . . ." <sup>78</sup> Further ruminating on the typically eighteenth-century problem of Reason as a check on our Passions, he finds that "the Great and most Illustrious Characters on Record demonstrate that they seldom were attended or influenced by this divine Monitor, as Nimrod, Alexander, Julius Caesar, Hanibal, & even Cato," <sup>79</sup> and he comes to the conclusion that all human passions must "in some degree . . . be regulated by Reason" and that we "must observe operations of these in man," for, he quotes, "'The proper study of Mankind is man.'" <sup>80</sup> His knowledge of Pope is attested to by another quotation from that poet's work. In a letter to a nephew he recalls that "Hills peep o'er Hills, and Alps on Alps arise." <sup>81</sup>

philosophical discourse; it contains numerous interlineations and shows the marks of many erasures.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 354.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.* See chapter II.

<sup>78</sup> Lengthy dissertation in *Bartram Papers*, I.

<sup>75</sup> *Travels*, 465.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.* From Pope's *Essay on Man*, II, 2.

<sup>81</sup> *Essay on Criticism*, II, 32. For the complete letter, see appendix.

It is plain that William Bartram's cultural equipment was considerable, and was undoubtedly an important factor in his success as a continuator of his father's work in the natural sciences. A still greater factor, however, was Bartram's personality, which must be taken into consideration in any attempt to account for Bartram's fame and influence on his time. Much as he followed in his father's footsteps there were subtle differences between the two men. John Bartram was robust, positive, assertive; William Bartram was gentle, timid, sensitive. His father, a man of action, had never been so happy as when on horseback out in the woods exploring, or out in his fields working.<sup>82</sup> There was more of the poet in William Bartram, who felt elated when "surveying the beautiful and wonderful productions which are scattered over the face of the earth."<sup>83</sup> The element of beauty was necessary to his happiness. If his scientific curiosity was curbed at all it was by his aesthetic sensibility. "He was a man gentle of temperament and preferred to be drawn to a spot by the luscious scent of some white, night-blooming species, than by the nerve-racking cry of [the panther]."<sup>84</sup> It was no accident that Dr. Fothergill sent him to explore the botanical resources of Florida. As a matter of fact Dr. Fothergill was not at all interested in Florida and its "great variety of plants, . . . many of them unknown." What he wished mainly was to introduce into England "the more hardy American plants, such as will bear our winters without much shelter." But Bartram was not interested in the "back parts of Canada"<sup>85</sup> and Dr. Fothergill was finally persuaded to assist the "young Quaker" to ride "through the savannas and the glorious forests of the Creeks and Cherokees with . . . surpassing joy."<sup>86</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Note Howard Pyle's fine description of a typical John Bartram departure: "The wife and the daughters wept, the sons shook their father's hand in silence, and the negro servants grinned at the fine show their master made as he rattled away on his old gray mare. He plunged immediately and boldly into the wilderness. . . ." *Harper's Magazine*, LX, 329-330.

<sup>83</sup> Quoted in S. Austin Allibone's *Critical Dictionary of English Literature and British and American Authors*, I, 137. Philadelphia, 1870.

<sup>84</sup> *The Craftsman*, XXIV (May, 1913), 197.

<sup>85</sup> Letter from Dr. Fothergill to John Bartram, October 22, *Memorials*, 334.

<sup>86</sup> "The Travels of William Bartram." *The Saturday Review of Literature*, April 21, 1928.

In spite of their gentleness, neither the father nor the son was without critical judgment on men and manners and on the world of their day in general. John Bartram expressed his opinions more boldly and aggressively; William Bartram more guardedly, lest he hurt anybody. Writing to Collinson John Bartram confessed that "upon the topic of astrology, magic and mystic divinity," he was "apt to be a little troublesome, by inquiring into the foundation and reasonableness of these notions—which, thee knows, will not bear to be searched and examined into."<sup>87</sup> On the subject of the future of America Crèvecoeur quotes him as saying: "Our country is, no doubt, the cradle of an extensive future population; the old world is growing weary of its inhabitants, they must come here to flee from the tyranny of the great. But doth not thee imagine, that the great will, in the course of years, come over here also; for it is the misfortune of all societies everywhere to hear of great men, great rulers, and of great tyrants."<sup>88</sup> On occasion John Bartram could wax ironic. "Our domestic animals," he remarked while discussing bird migration, "are . . . like their masters; every one contends for his own dunghill, and is for driving all off that come to encroach upon them."<sup>89</sup>

William Bartram, too, could wax ironic, though more delicately. Replying to Sir Joseph Banks, President of the Royal Society, who had offered him one shilling sterling for every new plant which he might discover in the South, he wrote: "William Bartram, in answer to Joseph Banks's proposal says, that there are not over 500 species altogether in the provinces of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, West and East Florida, and Georgia, which at one shilling each, amounts only to £25—supposing everything acceptable. It has taken me two years to search only part of the last two provinces, and find by experience it cannot be done with tolerable conveniency for less than £100 a year, therefore it cannot reasonably be expected that he can accept the offer."<sup>90</sup> He too ventured certain prophecies

<sup>87</sup> "Sketch of John and William Bartram." *Popular Science Monthly*, XL, 831.

<sup>88</sup> *Op. cit.*, Letter XI, pp. 189-190.

<sup>89</sup> Middleton, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

<sup>90</sup> "Biographical Sketch of William Bartram." *American Philosophical Society Pamphlets*, v. 1166.



about the future of America or parts of America. Thus he did not "hesitate to pronounce" his opinion that Augusta would "very soon become the metropolis of Georgia,"<sup>91</sup> and that "the great and beautiful Alachua Savanna" would "at some future day be one of the most populous and delightful seats on earth."<sup>92</sup>

In all extant descriptions of William Bartram he is pictured as a kind, gentle Quaker, with his father's indefatigable curiosity and zeal in the cause of natural science. In both the element of personal ambition was completely subordinated to their interest in science. They were looked upon by their contemporaries and they looked upon themselves as pioneers laboring in a worthy cause. Early in his career, in 1745, John Bartram could write in regard to a shipment of plants he had sent to England and which was intercepted by the French or the Spanish: "If I could know that [the goods] fell into the hands of men of learning and curiosity I should be more easy. Though they are what is commonly called our enemies, yet, if they make proper use of what I have laboured for, let them enjoy it with the blessings of God."<sup>93</sup> William, being more analytically-minded, sometimes felt it necessary to defend the study of natural science and his own preoccupation with it. In the midst of a discussion on the migration of birds, he reminds himself that "There may perhaps be some persons who consider this enquiry not to be productive of any real benefit to mankind, and pronounce such attention to natural history merely speculative, and only fit to amuse and entertain the idle virtuoso; however the ancients thought otherwise, for with them, the knowledge of the passage of birds was the study of their priests and philosophers, and was considered a matter of real and indispensable use to the state. . . ."<sup>94</sup>

Two descriptions of William Bartram by visitors to the Garden deserve reproduction here. One is by the Reverend Manasseh Cutler, a prominent New England botanist; the other is by William Dunlap, painter and playwright, who in the company of Charles Brockden Brown called on Bartram. The Reverend

<sup>91</sup> *Travels*, 317.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 251.

<sup>93</sup> *Memorials*, p. 353.

<sup>94</sup> *Travels*, 284-5.

Cutler's visit took place in July, 1787, a year after Bartram had been elected a member of the American Philosophical Society. He came to make this visit, Cutler tells us, because when he inquired of his Philadelphia friends, Dr. Gerardus Clarkson and Dr. Benjamin Rush, "after Mr. Cox, the present Professor of Botany in the University" of Pennsylvania, both gentlemen hemmed and hawed and "Dr. Rush observed that Mr. Bartram had much more botanical knowledge than Cox, and employed much of his time in the examination of plants. . . . Dr. Clarkson proposed a ride early in the morning to Bartram's seat, two miles beyond the Schuylkill. . . ." <sup>95</sup> Accordingly early the next morning Cutler, accompanied by a large group of "members of Convention," <sup>96</sup> including Governor Martin, James Madison, and Alexander Hamilton, alighted at the Garden from Dr. Clarkson's "phaeton" and looked for Mr. Bartram, whom they found,

with another man, hoeing in his garden, in a short jacket and trowsers, and without shoes or stockings. He at first stared at us, and seemed to be somewhat embarrassed at seeing so large and gay a company so early in the morning. Dr. Clarkson . . . introduced me to him, and informed him that I wished to converse with him on botanical subjects, . . . He presently got rid of his embarrassment, and soon became very sociable. . . . We ranged the several alleys, and he gave me the generic and specific names, place of growth, properties, etc., so far as he knew them. . . . The other gentlemen were very free and sociable with him, particularly Governor Martin, who has a smattering of botany and a fine taste for natural history.

Dunlap and Brown's visit must have taken place at a much later time, for Dunlap says,

Arrived at the Botanist's Garden, we approached an old man who, with a rake in his hand, was breaking the clods of earth in a tulip bed. His hat was old and flapped over his face, his coarse shirt was seen near his neck, as he wore no cravat or kerchief; his waistcoat and breeches were both of leather, and his shoes were tied with leather strings. We approached and accosted him. He ceased his work, and entered into conversation with the ease and politeness of nature's noblemen. His

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<sup>95</sup> *Life, Journals, and Correspondence of Rev. Manasseh Cutler.* Cincinnati, 1888. I, 258.

<sup>96</sup> Apparently the Constitutional Convention.

countenance was expressive of benignity and happiness. This was the botanist, traveller, and philosopher we had come to see.<sup>97</sup>

Both sketches of Bartram emphasize his modesty and simplicity and, along with what we know from other sources, help us to round out the character of the man. William Bartram had modesty and integrity; he had piety and idealism, and yet a sense of the practical; he had geniality and optimism; he had courage and enthusiasm; he enjoyed keenly the simple vicissitudes of life. Above all, he had an insatiable curiosity. These characteristics permeate his writing and make the reading of it the exhilarating experience of communing with a rich personality.

Perhaps Bartram's curiosity should be stressed first among the attributes that have helped to make his writings a memorable discovery. In an age when what is rather vaguely called "the spirit of romanticism" imbued man with a new sense of wonder, Bartram strove to know the curiosities of nature, and he was at once naïve enough and subtle enough to see the marvelous and curious even in the most ordinary and normal manifestations of nature. He was primarily a naturalist, to be sure, but his interests were eclectic. He observed trees and shrubs, geological formations and Indian mounds, land and aquatic animals, man and woman, human institutions and divine emanations. His curiosity marks him a child of an age when men sought "to become more and more aware of the infinite ties binding all men together to each other and to the great forces of the universe of which they are the noblest manifestation,"<sup>98</sup> and coupled with his abilities and modesty it has proved especially attractive.

"Obedient to the admonitions of my attendant spirit, curiosity," he confesses, ". . . I again sat off on my southern excursion . . ." (*Travels*, 9). His curiosity leads him on, and Bartram yields to its admonitions easily and cheerfully. His love of the unknown is a keen but pleasurable appetite. He remains in any place only long enough to taste its beauty. At Augusta, he tells us, he was "much delighted with the new

<sup>97</sup> William Dunlap, *A History of the American Theatre*. New York, 1832, p. 170.

<sup>98</sup> John H. Randall, *The Making of the Modern Mind*. Boston, 1926, p. 42.

beauties . . . yet, as I was never long satisfied with present possession, however endowed with every possible charm to attract the sight, or intrinsic value to engage and fix the esteem, I was restless to be searching for more, my curiosity being insatiable" (p. 34).

Occasionally Bartram may rationalize his curiosity, justifying his driving impulse on the ground that it results in public good. Thus when a young mechanic, who has accompanied him for some days, suddenly decides to leave him, Bartram has no regrets. "Our views," he philosophizes, "were probably totally opposite; he . . . seemed to be actuated by no other motives, than either to establish himself . . . where, by following his occupation, he might be enabled to procure without much toil and danger, the necessities and conveniences; or by industry and frugality, perhaps establish his fortune. Whilst I, continually impelled by a restless spirit of curiosity, in pursuit of new productions of nature, my chief happiness consisted in tracing and admiring the infinite power, majesty and perfection of the great Almighty Creator, and in the contemplation, that through divine aid and permission, I might be instrumental in discovering, and introducing into my country, some original productions of nature, which might become useful to society" (p. 73).

Sometimes his curiosity led him into danger, as when he fought off the onslaughts of alligators and although he was employing his time in paddling close along the shore, he yet "could not forbear looking . . . behind" (p. 126). Always it led him into hardship. "Next morning early," he records, "sat off, on my return, and taking a different path back, for the sake of variety, though somewhat farther about, and at a greater distance from the banks of the river. . . ." (p. 412). And sometimes it entailed the risking of his health. "Although my health was not established, feverish symptoms continuing to lurk about me, I resolved, notwithstanding, immediately to embrace this offer, and embarked again . . ." (p. 413).

There is no undue pride in Bartram's admissions of his yielding to his "attendant spirit." For modesty, we have seen, was another outstanding characteristic of his personality. The record of his exploits is written with a winning humility. He accepts them as mere facts behind which God's wisdom operates. A



diligent investigator, he came to conclusions on many subjects, but the statement of his conclusions is never dogmatic. His knowledge of certain tribes of American Indians was so extensive that he was invited to contribute a series of authoritative answers to specific questions, even before his *Travels* appeared.<sup>99</sup> Yet his remarks in the *Travels* on what the government's policy towards the Indians ought to be are apologetic, for he is convinced "that such important matters are far above my ability" (p. xxxiv).

He was equally modest in the expression of his opinions on other matters, where he might have every right to be oracular—if such a right be yielded to any investigator. In geology, for instance, his knowledge was of considerable reputation. Everywhere in his *Travels* and in his *Diary* are indications of his extensive observations. Men of science with whom he corresponded spoke with respect of his accomplishment in this field. Professor Barton printed an article of his, "Conjectures relative to the Scite of Bristol, in Penn."<sup>100</sup> Yet he refused to insist on his knowledge, and, in one case, having offered a plausible solution for a particular soil's behavior, he modestly adds: "however, of these causes and secret operations of nature I am ignorant, and resume again my proper employment, that of discovering and collecting data . . ." (*Travels*, p. 23).

The expression of his ornithological ideas is another illustration of his modesty. The *Encyclopedia Americana* classifies him as a "botanist and ornithologist," and *Johnson's Universal Cyclopedia* quotes the opinion of D. Cones that William Bartram was "the starting point of a distinctly American school of ornithology." Alexander Wilson sent him imitations of birds "for your opinion and correction, which I value beyond those of anybody else,"<sup>101</sup> and wrote that he was satisfied "that none

<sup>99</sup> "Observations on the Creek and Cherokee Indians. William Bartram, 1789." *Transactions of the American Ethnological Society*, New York, 1853. III, Part I, 1-81. Also, "Answers to Queries about Indians by William Bartram" in John Howard Payne's *Commonplace Book* (In MS. Division, Pennsylvania Historical Society).

<sup>100</sup> *Prof. Barton's Philadelphia Medical and Physical Journal*, I, Part II, 1805, 131-33.

<sup>101</sup> *Biographical Sketch of William Bartram with Portrait*. American Philosophical Society Pamphlet, v. 1166.



. . . have bestowed such minute attention on the subject as you yourself have done. Indeed, they [the other American ornithologists] have done little more than copied your nomenclature and observations, and referred to your authority."<sup>102</sup> In spite of all this, Bartram always admitted the deficiencies of his knowledge on this subject, and after printing his list of American birds—"the most complete and correct . . . prior to the work of Alexander Wilson"<sup>103</sup>—he was still aware "that there are yet several kinds of land birds, and a great number of aquatic fowl that have not come under my particular notice, therefore shall leave them to the investigation of future travelling naturalists of greater ability and industry" (*Travels*, 296).

Closely related to this feeling of modesty, almost humility, is Bartram's simple piety. The glories of nature are a manifestation of God's beneficence, and so are his own natural discoveries. He has had extraordinary success on his journey; he has kept his good health, has escaped accidents "incident to such excursions, through uninhabited wildernesses, and an Indian frontier," and he has made an "extensive collection of new discoveries of natural productions"; ought he to preen himself on his accomplishment? "On the recollection," he concludes, "of so many and great favors and blessings, I now, with a high sense of gratitude, presume to offer up my sincere thanks to the Almighty, the Creator and Preserver" (pp. 46-47).

He thus "presumes" on many occasions in the record of his travels, sometimes even to the extent of growing fervent and poetic. Extremely sensitive to all forms of beauty, Bartram at times becomes himself a voice of nature hymning the praises of an all-creative God. One such hymn will suffice as an illustration. Standing on a little mound, he views, at sunrise, a prospect which reveals "at one view the whole of the sublime and pleasing." As "nature again revives," he obeys "the cheerful summons of the gentle monitors of the meads and groves."

Ye vigilant and faithful servants of the Most High! Ye who worship the Creator morning, noon, and eve, in simplicity of heart! I haste to join the universal anthem. My heart and voice unite with yours, in sincere homage to the great Creator, the universal Sovereign.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.* Letter from Alexander Wilson, April, 1807.

<sup>103</sup> John W. Harshberger, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

O may I be permitted to approach the throne of mercy! May these my humble and penitent supplications, amidst the universal shouts of homage from thy creatures, meet with thy acceptance!

And although I am sensible, that my service cannot increase or diminish thy glory, yet it is pleasing to thy servant to be permitted to sound thy praise; for, O sovereign Lord! we know that thou alone art perfect, and worthy to be worshipped . . . (pp. 100-101).

The mood of night and loneliness, so different from the exaltation engendered by the sun, finds him no less pious:

At midnight I awake, when I find myself alone in the wilderness of Florida, on the shores of Lake George. Alone indeed, but under the care of the Almighty . . . (p. 158).

Bartram's piety, modesty, and simplicity cannot be well understood without a consideration of his Quakerism. Brought up in an atmosphere which emphasized the humble virtues of character, Bartram was a man of peace, of few needs, and of temperate habits. His unobtrusive geniality inspires the pages of his work. He records his meetings with planters and traders—Mr. M'Intosh, James Spalding, James Bailey, Mr. Marshall, Mr. M'Latche, Mr. Rumsey—and has a kind word for everyone. Everywhere he found, he tells us, "sincerity in union with all the virtues, under the influence of religion" (p. 15). What they found can best be gleaned from such a characteristic letter as that of his uncle, William Bartram, written from Cape Fear as early as June 11, 1762, to John Bartram:

Dear Brother

The parting with your Son Bill this day felt harder to me than the Parting with my own son, his Behaviour to me & my family has been so agreeable as well as to others. . . .<sup>104</sup>

and from the attitude of the Indians, who were generally hostile to the white traders that came among them. They called him "Puc-Puggy" or Flower Hunter and their chiefs generally received him "with complaisance," giving him unlimited permission to travel over the country, and recommending him to the friendship and protection of their people (*Travels*, p. 185). One Indian king complimented him to the extent of including

<sup>104</sup> *Bartram Papers*, I.

him among "his own children or people, . . . adding, 'Our whole country is before you, where you may range about at pleasure, gather physic plants and flowers, and every other production'" (pp. 237-38).

The Indians also saw and admired the courage of the man. He was not only a peculiar white stranger, who came among them to gather flowers instead of coming to drive an advantageous trading bargain, but a useful man. His knowledge of medicine was at their disposal, and so was his courage. His farcical description of the way he rids a terrorized village of a rattlesnake, indirectly reveals his own fearlessness; and the exploit earned for him the friendship of the Seminoles, who henceforth classed him as "a worthy and brave warrior" (p. 263).

The episode with the snake suggests a caution. A man characterized by simplicity, modesty, and honesty, whose dominant interest is the gathering of botanical specimens, is in danger of giving a wrong impression. He may appear like the caricature of a scientist created by Cooper in his *Prairie*. Bartram, however, was a perfectly balanced and practical person. The Indians treated him with kindness not because he never cheated them and was harmless, but because he knew how to deal with them. "The man presently offered us a fawn-skin of honey," he reports an encounter with a party of Indians in the woods, "which we gladly accepted, and at parting I presented him with some fish hooks, sewing needles &c. For in my travels amongst the Indians, I always furnished myself with such useful and acceptable little articles of light carriage, for presents" (p. 244). Nor was he so absorbed in his work that his courage might be the result of foolhardy abstraction. When the danger was too great he could change his mind about conducting his researches in a particular territory. Thus he admits that when "it appeared very plain" that he could not with safety range the Overhill settlements until an Indian treaty was concluded, he suddenly decided "to defer these researches at this time" (p. 366). These little practical touches season Bartram's personality and add to his appeal an element of confidence. One feels that he was by temperament well-prepared for his chosen work. His curiosity was supported by patience; his courage was tempered

with common sense; his unworldliness was balanced by a native shrewdness and ability.

In connection with the practical equipment of Bartram, it is necessary to remember his mechanical skill and his ability to draw and paint. His drawings, we have noted, attracted the attention of his father's friends and patrons in England. Dr. Lionel Chalmers of Charleston, South Carolina, wrote to John Bartram in April, 1773, that "Billy" Bartram "certainly has a good notion of painting."<sup>105</sup> A final tribute to his artistic ability is found in the fact that "most of the plates in Barton's *Elements of Botany* (1803) were engraved from drawings by Bartram."<sup>106</sup>

To these practical details should also be added his ability in swimming, fishing, shooting, horsemanship, and cooking. "I being a pretty good swimmer," he remarks casually, apropos of an incident in which he helped to save a pack of horses from drowning, "in the midst of the bustle, and to avoid being beat over and perhaps wounded, leapt out, and caught hold of the dock of one of the horses" (*Travels*, 305). And again, modestly, "I plunged in . . . , and being a tolerable swimmer, soon reached the opposite shore" (p. 445). He is equally matter of fact in informing us that he took his bob and "soon caught more trout than" he needed for his supper, although he fished in a lagoon the entrance to which was guarded by alligators and once, to save himself, he had to jump from his canoe onto the shore (pp. 117-8-9-20). He tells us that he "dispatched" a temerarious alligator "by lodging the contents of my gun in his head" (p. 121). As a rider, "a good spirited horse under me, I generally kept a-head of my companions . . ." (p. 218). He was a good enough cook

. . . to roast some trout which I had caught . . . ; their heads I stewed in the juice of oranges, which, with boiled rice, afforded me a wholesome and delicious supper (p. 158).

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<sup>105</sup> The Simon Gratz Collection. Manuscript Division, Pennsylvania Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>106</sup> *Dictionary of American Biography*, II, 28 (Lane Cooper). Copies of some of Bartram's paintings and photographs of his drawings are preserved in the permanent exhibit in the natural history museum of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences.



Incidentally, his references to food often suggest the gourmet:

I staid here all night, and had for supper plenty of milk, butter, and very good cheese of their own make, which is a novelty in the maritime parts of Carolina and Georgia (p. 19).

. . . having in the course of the day, procured plenty of sea fowl, such as curlews, willets, snipes, sand birds and others; we had them dressed for supper, and seasoned with excellent oysters, which lay in heaps in the water, close to our landing place (p. 70).

. . . the bream my favorite fish (p. 228).

. . . they [squabs] were almost a lump of fat, and made us a rich supper; some were roasted, and made others into a pilloe<sup>107</sup> with rice; most of them, except the bitterns and tantali, were so excessively fishy in taste and smell, I could not relish them (p. 249).

An interesting document, a piece of unconscious self-characterization by Bartram, has been preserved in the diary of one of his nephews, Dr. James Bartram. It is a letter dated September 23, 1804, and addressed to his nephew who was about to sail for Batavia as Surgeon on the ship "George Washington."<sup>108</sup> The advice offered his nephew discloses the simple tenets of Bartram's philosophy of life, which may be summarized as an insistence on reverence, tolerance, temperance, honesty, liberality, gallantry, and urbanity. In addition to prescribing a general code of conduct, Bartram also "presumes" to instruct his nephew on some specific points, such as what to do with his leisure, how to safeguard his health, and what to eat and drink in the tropics. It is characteristic of Bartram to suggest that the young man devote his leisure to "philosophic observations, and study; particularly physick and surgery." For "amusement, and profitable exercise to the mind" he recommends observation and study of natural history, "which comprehends Zoology and Botany, not only the product of seas but of land when thee

<sup>107</sup> A variant of *pilau*. "An Oriental dish, consisting of rice boiled with fowl, meat, or fish, and spices, raisins, etc.—Appears in English in many forms, according to the language or locality whence the writer has adopted it . . . 1612 *Trav. Four Englishm.* 55 The most common dish (amongst the Turks) is Pilaw . . . made of Rice and small morsels of Mutton boiled . . ." (N. E. D.).

<sup>108</sup> This letter has been copied from Dr. James Bartram's diary by Mr. Henry L. Jones of New York, a great-grandson of Dr. Bartram, and is used in this study through his courtesy. See appendix.



arrives." It is no less characteristic of Bartram to advise caution in the use of the "delicious fruits" of the South and abstemiousness "in the use of spiritous liquor and strong and heating wines." The letter ends with a postscript: "My Dear James fear and adore God."<sup>109</sup>

Ernest Hartley Coleridge has stated, perhaps with a touch of exaggeration, that William Bartram "took up his work as a botanist, to put his humanitarian precepts into practice and to bear witness to the passionate but undogmatic faith which he had learned from his father's lips."<sup>110</sup> These humanitarian precepts and his passionate faith color all his views, whether concerning man's relations to Nature and to his fellowmen or whether merely topics of the day. We have noted the part Quakerism played in influencing his views. There remains but to emphasize Bartram's kinship to the dominant views of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Reason and temperance are two of his most important principles in the guidance of life. It is easy to see that he stressed them both in his letter to his nephew. Reason is the "Divine Monitor, . . .—supposed by the Antient Philosophers an emanation from the Divine Intelligence," which "points out to us . . . what is right and true virtue" and "decides on every operation or motion of the sensations . . ." If we err, in spite of Reason, it is because "The Mind is often seduced by the interposition of our passions and affections, by which means we can't sufficiently attend to and obey the dictates of Reason."<sup>111</sup> He shared the distrust of the sensations typical of religion and of eighteenth century thought generally.

In spite of his geniality and love of human society, he was at times quite bitter in his contemplations of the moral imperfections of mankind. Alone in the woods, he could compare his "present situation . . . to Nebuchadnezzar's, when expelled from

<sup>109</sup> In connection with this letter, it is of interest to note the following item appearing in William Bartram's diary: "April 18, 1818. Died this morning Dr. James Bartram of Kingess grandson of the celebrated John Bartram the Botanist & naturalist." (*Manuscript Diary of William Bartram, 1802-1822*. In the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia.)

<sup>110</sup> *Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature*, 2d series, XXVII, 69-92.

<sup>111</sup> *Bartram Papers*, I.

the society of men, and constrained to roam in the mountains and wilderness, there to herd and feed with the wild beasts of the forests."<sup>112</sup> Yet this same society that he missed when in the wilderness could at other times fill him with indignant disillusionment:

Man is cruel. Hypocritical, a Dissembler, his dissimulation exceeds that of any being we are acquainted with, for he dissembles dissimulation itself. . . . Nay the whole of Human or Worldly Wisdom is a continual . . . practice of deceit, fraud, dissimulation & Hypocrisy. The more any man or woman approaches to Honesty & Simplicity, the more he is accounted a Fool and he is in the broad road & hastening on to Poverty, contempt & Misery, until Death relieves him from oppression & disgrace.<sup>113</sup>

The greatest single cause of man's imperfections, which man ironically enough calls "human wisdom," is intemperance. It is intemperance that makes man cruel, wasteful, avaricious, treacherous, unjust. It is startling to come upon Bartram's opinions on such subjects as government, economics, nationalism, war, social institutions. One suddenly realizes that this extremely shy, genial person, so remote from participation in any form of "worldly" activity, a sort of scientific monk, nevertheless kept a sharp eye upon the world and its bustle, and formed opinions often characterized by a hard, shrewd profundity. Here, for example, are a few general remarks on riches and covetousness:

According to the present systems of civilization Legislators affirm that the strength & prosperity of a state depends on its Riches: Money they say is the *sinews of War, the Oil which keep the political wheels in regular & continual motion, The Mainspring of the State Machine*, etc. etc. And for this Reason they encourage Mechanic Arts, Manufactures, Trade & commerce, in order to increase the riches of the people. Luxury & effeminacy is accordingly not only countenanced but encouraged . . . because they averr it gives spirit to Industry. . . . Even Industry so great & almost universally applauded a Virtue . . . is among the pernicious & dangerous Evils, because it encourages Avarice, contention, & in the end perhaps War. . . .<sup>114</sup>

Suppress Covetousness which begets contention, violence, love of power, riches, magnificence & fame. Intemperance destroys.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>112</sup> *Travels*, 360.

<sup>113</sup> *Bartram Papers*, I.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

And here are a few comparisons between Indian "savagery" and white civilization:

The Indians make war against, kill, and destroy their own species, and their motives spring from the same erroneous source as they do in all other nations of mankind; that is, the ambition of exhibiting to their fellows a superior character of personal and national valour, and thereby immortalizing themselves, by transmitting their names with honour and lustre to posterity; or revenge of their enemy, for public or personal insults; or, lastly, to extend the borders and boundaries of their territories. But I cannot find, upon the strictest inquiry, that their bloody contests at this day are marked with deeper stains of inhumanity or savage cruelty, than what may be observed amongst the most civilized nations: they do indeed scalp their enemy, but they do not kill the females or children of either sex (*Travels*, 213).

They are given to adultery and fornication, but, I suppose, in no greater excess than other nations of men (p. 213).

One feels, however, that these views, expressed at infrequent intervals, were not very important to Bartram. For himself he had evolved a philosophy of simple faith in God, in the moral goodness of Nature, and in the infallibility of Reason as a true guide in life. These were important. They account for his serenity and optimism. Above all his sensitivity to the beauties of nature kept him spiritually young and preoccupied. Duyckinck's reaction to the *Travels* is fundamentally right. "All his faculties are alive in this book, whether he describes a tree, a fish, a bird, a beast, Indian, or hospitable planter. He detects fragrance, vitality, and health everywhere in the animal world."<sup>116</sup> Inheriting a simple worship of God and an interest in God's world, in its simple, natural forms, William Bartram found in the study and contemplation of nature a source of delight and an answer to the perplexities of his mind.

<sup>116</sup> *Cyclopaedia of American Literature*, I, 234.

## CHAPTER II

### PHILOSOPHY OF NATURE

Before discussing a man's philosophy of nature it is necessary to determine in what sense or senses he uses the term, for, as Professor Lovejoy has cautioned us,<sup>1</sup> the word "Nature" has been employed to designate many and diverse concepts. Fortunately, in the case of William Bartram, the task is not a difficult one. He had no complex philosophies; he was, we have seen, a scientist and a Quaker, and it was this duality of his interests and influences which colored his view of nature. As a scientist he conceived of nature as, in Professor Lovejoy's words, "empirical reality"; as a Quaker, he saw in nature the manifestation, by means of this empirical reality, of God's majesty and beauty.

Bartram's scientific interests were centered in what was rather loosely designated in the eighteenth century as natural history. His particular branch of that study was botany, but he did not hesitate to undertake zoological, ornithological, geological, ethnological, and even what would be termed today psychological investigations. As a botanist he followed the example of his father, who in turn was one of the many naturalists throughout the world whose enthusiasm had been stimulated by the work of the great Linnaeus. E. A. W. Zimmermann, Bartram's German translator and a professor "matheseos et physices" at Braunschweig,<sup>2</sup> claimed that Linnaeus had revolutionized the study of natural history and its related sciences. Linnaeus's "Genauigkeit im Beobachten, sein Anordnen und Eintheilen nach festen Grundsätzen, seine Anwendungen der von ihm enteckten und beobachteten Körper blieben nicht auf seine eigene Wissenschaft eingeschränkt; es verbreitete sich eben dadurch gleichsam unmerklich eine neue Methode der Ordnung,

<sup>1</sup> Arthur O. Lovejoy, "Nature as Aesthetic Norm." *Modern Language Notes*, XLII, 444-450.

<sup>2</sup> *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, XLV, 256.



des Forschens und Untersuchens in alle Nebenzweige dieser Kenntnisse." <sup>3</sup> Even Professor Lovejoy, who is inclined to dispute the originality and magnitude of Linnaeus's contribution to science, concedes that "by the force and serious enthusiasm of his personality, and by the example of his admirably exact observation, Linnaeus stimulated a prodigious amount of ardent and careful botanical and zoological research on the part of others." <sup>4</sup> This influence of Linnaeus and his fellow scholars and disciples contributed greatly to the end that "Careful observation of nature and accurate experimentation had at last become . . . respectable. . . ." <sup>5</sup> Buffon's dictum that "The only good science is the knowledge of facts" <sup>6</sup> expresses the spirit underlying the widespread study of the natural sciences in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Bartram's indebtedness to both Linnaeus and Buffon has already been noted.

Around Bartram's dual attitude towards nature—the scientific and the Quaker—other encrustations are perceptible. For one thing, the aesthetic appeal of nature runs through all of Bartram's reactions. Nature is beauty; being a manifestation of God's greatness and benevolence it could not help being beautiful. The objective scientist in Bartram occasionally observes a phenomenon in nature which clashes with the concept of benevolence: his description, for instance, of a spider pouncing upon a bee, inflicting wounds like a "butcher," and finally devouring it, is quite horribly realistic.<sup>7</sup> But such disquieting moments are rare in Bartram. Nourished upon the ideals of the mid-eighteenth century, Bartram accepts the physical world of God as wholly good, leans heavily upon the doctrine of the superiority of Nature and man in a primitive state over Nature and man subjected to the processes of civilization, and preaches sensibility and humanitarianism. Yet the objective scientist

<sup>3</sup> "Vorrede des Ubersetzers." *Reisen durch Nord- und Sud-Karolina*, etc. Aus dem Englischen mit Anmerkungen von E. A. W. Zimmermann. Berlin, 1793.

<sup>4</sup> "The Place of Linnaeus in the History of Science," by Arthur O. Lovejoy. *Popular Science Monthly*, LXXI (1907), 501.

<sup>5</sup> John Herman Randall, *The Making of the Modern Mind*, p. 264.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in L. Ducros, *Les Encyclopedistes*, 326. See Randall, *op. cit.*, 264 and 280.

<sup>7</sup> *Travels*, xxix-xxx-xxxi.



sometimes forgets his doctrines and gives expression to meditations that conflict with the generality of his views.

Philip Marshall Hicks, in tracing the development of the natural history essay in American literature, finds that, in spite of Bartram's numerous predecessors in this field, it was Bartram who was responsible for the introduction into American natural history literature of four elements: "scientific observation, aesthetic appreciation of nature, the belief in the immanence of the creative principle in nature, and the feeling of compassion for the suffering of the lower orders."<sup>8</sup> The predecessors specifically mentioned are Sir Walter Raleigh, Captain John Smith, William Wood, Thomas Morton, John Josselyn, Jonathan Carver, and Mark Catesby. Remembering the purpose of Raleigh's and Smith's expeditions to America one is not surprised, of course, at the absence of these elements from either Raleigh's letters or Smith's *Map of Virginia*. The writings of Wood, Morton, and Josselyn<sup>9</sup> all deal with New England. Only Wood and Josselyn had any scientific interest at all, but their equipment did not always measure up to their aims. Carver's account of his travels attempts, in part, to describe the same territory that Bartram covered some years later, but his book is now generally believed to be mainly a compilation of other men's writings rather than a record of original observations.<sup>10</sup> Mark Catesby's work<sup>11</sup> is a different story; it is based on the prolonged studies of a trained naturalist. Bartram's acquaintance with Catesby's volume has been noted, as well as his acquaintance with the work of another English naturalist, George Edwards. To the scientific observations of Catesby and Edwards must be added those of Peter Kalm,<sup>12</sup> a pupil of Linnaeus, and John

<sup>8</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 28.

<sup>9</sup> William Wood, *New England Prospect*, London, 1634; Thomas Morton, *The New England Canaan*, Amsterdam, 1637; John Josselyn, *New England's Rarities*, London, 1672.

<sup>10</sup> Jonathan Carver, *Travels through the Interior Parts of North America in the Years 1766, 1767, 1768*. London, 1778. For an estimate of the authenticity of Carver's book see *Cambridge History of American Literature*, I, 192-193.

<sup>11</sup> Mark Catesby, *Natural History of the Carolinas, Florida and the Bahama Islands*. London, 1748.

<sup>12</sup> Pehr Kalm, *Travels into North America*. English translation by J. R. Forster. London, 1770-1771.

Bartram himself. Genuine scientific interest in nature was well-developed when William Bartram published his *Travels*.

Yet the statement made by Mr. Hicks as to the pioneering significance of William Bartram's work is true nevertheless. The four elements Bartram is said to have introduced were new to American nature literature, even though they did not originate with Bartram. They were popular currents in eighteenth-century European thought and literature. Along with the development of a scientific interest in nature there is perceptible a growing aesthetic appreciation of nature. Catesby's *Natural History* was preceded by Pope's *Windsor Forest*, the nature poems of Lady Winchelsea, and by Thomson's *Seasons*. The "belief in the immanence of the creative principle in nature" as well as "compassion for the suffering of the lower order" can both be found in the Deists and particularly in Lord Shaftesbury, who claimed "that the Deity is sufficiently revealed through natural phenomena"<sup>13</sup> and that "compassion is the supreme form of moral beauty, the neglect of it is the greatest of all offenses against nature's ordained harmony."<sup>14</sup> It is in the expression of these concepts of nature as modified and colored by his own temperament and personality that Bartram's originality lay.

There can be no question of any philosophy of nature in Bartram's scientific cataloguing of meteorological and seasonal phenomena, mere commonplace reporting of observations, such as the keeping of a calendar which many members of the American Philosophical Society, including Thomas Jefferson, indulged in, as part of a cooperative undertaking. In such a work as his *Manuscript Diary, 1802-1822*,<sup>15</sup> Bartram could be terse and objective, an uncritical recorder of changes in temperature, bird migrations, the flowering of plants, the appearances and disappearances of insects, interspersed with news items:

1802

March 20. . . . a flock of geese returning to the north.

22. . . . kingfisher arrived today from the southward. . . .

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<sup>13</sup> C. E. Moore, "Shaftesbury and the Ethical Poets in England." *PMLA*, XXXI (1916), 267. Shaftesbury's *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, and Times* was published in 1711.

<sup>14</sup> Moore, *op. cit.*, 271. <sup>15</sup> In the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences.

- May 4. . . . some buildings set on fire by the lightning & burnt—  
belonging to John Pearson.
- July 11, 12, 13, 14 & 15. Many cases of yellow fever in the City,  
said to be brot in a vessel from the Isle St. Domingo.
21. Apples ripe.
- 1819
- July 30. Therm. 98, 99, 102, & 104 in shade at different places.
- 1820
- Jan. 8. Was surprised at hearing the voice of the Cat-bird in the  
garden.

It is in his aesthetic expression, in giving vent to his reactions to the beauty of nature, that he becomes the subjective philosopher uttering views that he subtly absorbed in the atmosphere of his eighteenth-century home, in the eighteenth-century world in which he lived, and from the eighteenth-century books that he read.

Beginning the second paragraph of the book which was to make him famous, he meditates upon "This world, as a glorious apartment of the boundless palace of the sovereign Creator, . . . furnished with an infinite variety of animated scenes, inexpressibly beautiful and pleasing, equally free to the inspection and enjoyment of all his creatures" (*Travels*, xiv). He perceives "In every order of nature . . . a variety of qualities distributed amongst individuals, designed for different purposes and uses," and concludes "that the Author has impartially distributed his favours to his creatures, so that the attributes of each one seem to be of sufficient importance to manifest the divine and inimitable workmanship" (p. xvi).

All his meditations arise first in his aesthetic response to the external aspects of nature and then become sublimated and intellectualized into theological and moral philosophy. He first attains "a grand view of the boundless ocean" and then translates his emotion into the pious invocation, "O thou Creator supreme, almighty! how infinite and incomprehensible thy works! most perfect, and every way astonishing!" (p. 59). Looking at the great savanna, he first contemplates "the unlimited, varied, and truly astonishing native wild scenes of land-

scape and perspective" and then exclaims: "how is the mind agitated and bewildered, at being thus, as it were, placed on the borders of a new world! On the first view of such an amazing display of the wisdom and power of the supreme author of nature, the mind for a moment seems suspended, and impressed with awe" (p. 189). He first observes the animal creation, "finely formed self-moving beings," and then arrives at spiritual concepts:

We admire the mechanism of a watch, and the fabric of a piece of brocade, as being the production of art; these merit our admiration, and must excite our esteem for the ingenious artist or modifier; but nature is the work of God omnipotent; and an elephant, nay even this world, is comparatively but a very minute part of his works. If then the visible, the mechanical part of the animal creation, the mere material part, is so admirably beautiful, harmonious, and incomprehensible, what must be the intellectual system? that inexpressibly more essential principle, which secretly operates within? that which animates the inimitable machines, which gives them motion, impowers them to act, speak, and perform, this must be divine and immortal?" (pp. xxiv-xxv).

This attitude is commonly found in the eighteenth century—in the English Deists, in Rousseau's *Profession de foi du Vicaire Savoyard*, in Bernardin de St. Pierre, and in many of the English poets.

Having passed from "the visible . . . part of the animal creation" to the "essential principle" it is easy for Bartram to speculate upon the problem of the intellectual and spiritual difference between animals and man, who is also but a part of God's creation. Thus from the aesthetic and the moral Bartram passes into what approximates our modern psychological interest in animals. In his case, this interest extended also to plants. Observing the behaviour of the *Dionea muscipula* he is astonished at its artifice "to intrap incautious deluded insects . . . there behold one of the leaves just closed upon a struggling fly; another has gotten a worm; its hold is sure, its prey can never escape—carnivorous vegetable!" Soon his astonishment yields to philosophical reflection. "Can we after viewing this object," he argues, "hesitate a moment to confess, that vegetable beings are endued with some sensible faculties or attributes, similar to those that dignify animal nature; they are organical, living, and



self-moving bodies, for we see here, in this plant, motion and volition."<sup>16</sup>

Nowhere else is Bartram so plain-spoken in his belief that vegetables have volition. In the very next paragraph he is not quite certain whether it is "sense or instinct that influences" the actions of vegetables, and decides merely that "it must be some impulse," adding the query: "or does the hand of the Almighty act and perform this work in our sight?" (*Travels*, xxi). He recognizes, of course, differences between plants and animals: "animals have the powers of sound, and are locomotive," yet in essentials the differences are slight. "Vegetables" too, he observes, "have the power of moving and exercising their members, and have the means of transplanting and colonizing their tribes almost over the surface of the whole earth," (p. xxii), and besides, "The vital principle or efficient cause of motion and action, in the animal and vegetable system, perhaps may be more similar than we generally apprehend" (pp. xxi-xxii).

When he discusses animals, however, Bartram is much more definite in his theories. His observations of animal behavior are numerous and detailed, and his interpretations merge into a coherent system of thought. The basis of the system is the belief that nature is an emanation of a benevolent God, and that since the animal creation is a part of nature, it therefore, too, is benevolent. Consequently he becomes a champion of the right of animals to be treated humanely. A good deal of this syllogistic reasoning is nothing more than humanitarian emotion rationalized; this, however, does not minimize Bartram's contribution to the description and understanding of animal psychology.

His study of the behavior of a crow<sup>17</sup> is as cautiously worded as any modern scientist might wish. At the outset he warns us that he does not "here speak of the crow, collectively, as giving an account of the whole race," for he is convinced "that these birds differ as widely as men do from each other, in point of

<sup>16</sup> *Travels*, xx-xxi. Van Doren's edition of the *Travels* has "familiar" for "similar" (p. 19), which is obviously a misprint.

<sup>17</sup> "Anecdotes of an American Crow." By William Bartram. *Phila. Med. & Phys. Journal*, I, Part I, 1804, pp. 89-95.



talents and acquirements." He is speaking, he tells us, "of a particular bird of that species," which he "reared from the nest." He proceeds to give an account of the developing senses of this particular bird, senses which "seemed, as in man, to be only the organs or instruments of his intellectual powers, and of their effects, as directed towards the accomplishment of various designs, and the gratification of the passions." This study of his pet crow, whom Bartram named Tom, is so typical of Bartram's observation and rationalizing interpretation that more or less lengthy quotation of representative passages seems warranted:

This was a bird of a happy temperament. . . . He was tractable and benevolent, docile and humble, whilst his genius demonstrated extraordinary acuteness, and lively sensations. All these good qualities were greatly in his favor, for they procured him friends. . . . But what seemed most extraordinary, he seemed to have the wit to select and treasure up in his mind, and the sagacity to practice, that kind of knowledge which procured him the most advantage and profit.

He had great talent, and a . . . propensity to imitation . . . bragging . . . of his achievements.

This bird had an excellent memory. . . . He would . . . bear correction with wonderful patience and humility, supplicating with piteous and penitent cries and actions . . . he would console himself with chattering . . . he would . . . approach me for forgiveness and reconciliation . . . he would . . . diffidently advance, with soft-soothing expressions, and a sort of circumlocution. . . .

Tom appeared to be influenced by a lively sense of domination (an attribute prevalent in the animal creation): but, his ambition, in this respect, seemed to be moderated by a degree of reason, or reflection. . . .

Tom (I believe from a passion of jealousy) would approach me, with his usual caresses, and flattery, and after securing my notice and regard, he would address the dog in some degree of complaisance, and by words and action; and, if he could obtain access to him, would tickle him with his bill, jump upon him, and compose himself, for a little while. It was evident, however, that this seeming sociability was mere artifice to gain an opportunity to practice some mischievous trick; for no sooner did he observe the old dog to be dosing, than he would be sure to pinch his lips, and pluck his beard. . . .

It would be endless to recount instances of this bird's understanding, cunning, and operations, which, certainly, exhibited incontestable demonstrations of a regular combination of ideas, premeditation, reflection, and contrivance, which influenced his operations.

Bartram, however, is not always so cautious in stating that he is speaking only of a particular bird and not of a "whole race." More often his scientific curiosity is tinged with his humanitarianism and his studies in animal psychology are at the same time a defense of the whole animal kingdom. His father, John Bartram, writing earlier in the century, was of the opinion that "the creatures commonly called brutes possess higher qualifications, and more exalted ideas, than our traditional mystery-mongers are willing to allow them."<sup>18</sup> William Bartram on the same subject expressed not merely an "opinion" but a positive conviction which was an integral part of his whole philosophy of life. In the lengthy general dissertation found among his manuscripts he states that he considers it

. . . as a duty incumbent on me to declare my sentiments freely on a subject though of little moment to Mankind in general at this time. Yet to me of much importance. *Namely of the Dignity of Animal Nature*, with respect to the Station or Degree they hold in the grand System of Creation in this world. When considered in a Physiological sense, The great Naturalist & Phylosopher Linnaeus has constituted the whole terrestrial system under Three grand divisions which he calls kingdoms in Nature, Viz. the Mineral, a confused mass of inanimate matter, mixed together, consisting of four elements, namely, Earth, Water, Air & Fire. 2dly Vegetables, which are organical bodies animated, but not having sensation. 3, Animates, which are Living organical self-moving Bodies endowed with sentiment. At the head, or first in the Animal Kingdom he hath placed Man. A being endued with Wisdom the power & prerogative (above all other Terrestrial beings) of knowing himself and his Creator. This wisdom (*sapientia*) he imagins to be a Ray, emanation or particle of the Divine Intelligence communing with this Spirit or Mind of Man. . . .

We have no certain knowledge that Animals below the order of Mankind have no Intellectual powers. . . . After all the pains & labour which Buffon has taken to explain away their Intellectual & Rational Powers. He has thereby sufficiently established a truly wonderful Instinct, an Intuitive knowledge or understanding which he at the same time asserts to be the same in common with Man. . . . I cannot believe, I cannot be so impious, nay my soul revolts, is distressed, by such conjectures as to . . . imagin that Man, who is guilty of more mischief & wickedness than all other Animals together in this world should be

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<sup>18</sup> "Sketch of John and William Bartram." *Popular Science Monthly*, XL, 834.

exclusively endued with knowledge of the Creator & capable of expressing his love, gratitude & homage to the Great Author of Being. . . .<sup>19</sup>

His defense of the "dignity of animal Nature" is supported by his general Romantic primitivism. In spite of an occasional reservation fostered by his scientific studies, he generally leaned to the theory that everything that came from the Creator's hands was good, and that imperfections were the product of man. He observed, of course, that not only man but also his pet crow was capable of dissimulation—a vice he could not forgive; that cattle and horses, as well as man, were given to intemperance—another vice he abhorred; that untutored Indians, living in primitive blissfulness, often exhibited "vices, immoralities, and imperfections."<sup>20</sup> Yet, in general, he believed

that we act most rationally & vertuously when our actions seem to operate from simple instinct, or approach nearest to the manners of the Animal creation. For if we examine minutely the Morality or Manners of Animals, & compare them with those tribes of the human Race who yet remain in the simple state of primitive Nature, as our Indians, who have had but little intercourse with white people, we shall find but little difference between their manners & the animal creation in general.<sup>21</sup>

His views on this subject of the simple perfection of primitive manners and their similarity to animal behavior are given in great detail. "Having resided some considerable time amongst several of these nations," he goes on to say, "I can give a pretty concise view, both of their Arts & Sciences, & their Morality."<sup>22</sup> He then discusses Indian manners and customs in respect to love, reproduction, care of their young, and other central topics of human existence. The Indians build homes. They protect their persons and property. They protect the aged. "Instinct, knowledge or Reason directs them how to clothe themselves

<sup>19</sup> As already noted, in the preceding chapter, there is nothing to indicate whether the manuscript is a fragment of a long letter addressed to some friend or whether it is the rough draft of a philosophical paper. It does, however, contain the marks of a red wax seal.

<sup>20</sup> *Travels*, 212.

<sup>21</sup> *Bartram Papers*, I.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* For a more extended study of Bartram's treatment of the Indian see the next chapter.

in summer and to utilize furs in winter. They sing hymns to the Great Spirit. Express joy & sorrow." He then makes his application:

All these Actions & movements . . . we observe in the Animal Creation likewise, which we call Instinct in them or a Divine Intuitive knowledge but can't confess it to be Reason or Intelligence, because forsooth it will detract from the *Dignity of Human Nature*. . . .<sup>23</sup>

Conceding that animals cannot always do the things that man can do, such, for instance, as weaving brocade and building ships and watches, Bartram observes that many animals exceed man in ingenuity. No man can make a spider's web, a honeycomb with wax and honey, or a sea sponge. "A man alone," he remarks, "cannot make a living animal indued with a nature or powers of reproduction. He can at most only work upon or modify matter already created to his hand. And so can most other animals in some degree or other. . . ." <sup>24</sup> In his parallel between animals and man he goes so far as to claim the possession of language by animals. They tutor their young. They use sounds and words. Birds have a universal language. "Now," he concludes, "if Animals have a vocal Language, it is self-evident that they have Intelligence, they have Ideas & Understanding." <sup>25</sup>

His statement that birds have a "universal language" is elaborated in his Introduction to the *Travels*:

Birds are in general social and benevolent creatures; intelligent, ingenious, volatile, active beings: and this order of animal creation consists of various nations, bands, or tribes, as may be observed from their different structure, manners, and languages, or voice; each nation, though subdivided into many different tribes, retaining its general form or structure, a similarity of customs, and a sort of dialect or language, particular to that nation or genus from which those tribes seem to have descended or separated. What I mean by a language in birds, is the common notes or speech, that they use when employed in feeding themselves and their young, calling on one another, as well as their menaces against their enemy; for their songs seem to be musical compositions, performed only by the males, about the time of incubation, in part to divert and amuse the female. . . . This harmony, with the tender solicitude of the male, alleviates the toils, cares and distresses of the female, consoles her in solitary retirement whilst setting

<sup>23</sup> *Bartram Papers*, I; Bartram's italics.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*



(sic), and animate (sic) <sup>26</sup> her with affection and attachment to himself in preference to any other. The volatility of their species, and operation of their passions and affections, are particularly conspicuous in the different tribes of the thrush, famous for song; on a sweet May morning we see the red thrush (*turdus rufus*) perched on an elevated sprig of snowy Hawthorn . . . exerting their (sic) accomplishments in song, striving by varying and elevating their voices to excel each other, we observe a very agreeable variation, not only in tone but in modulation; the voice of one is shrill, another lively and elevated, others sonorous and quivering. . . .<sup>27</sup>

It is apparent that Bartram did not believe that all birds in the universe had one language, since he definitely speaks of "languages" and "dialects." It is more than probable that when he stated that birds have a universal language he meant merely that all birds in the universe had some sort of sound communication with members of their own species.

This entire point is not quite so important in the study of Bartram's philosophy of nature as the use he made of it. He used it as but one item in a vast series which proved to him that all nature is good and wise and that, consequently man's conduct ought to emulate nature. "Let us," he preached, ". . . by studying and contemplating the works and power of God, learn wisdom and understanding in the economy of nature. . . . Let us be obedient to the ruling powers in such things as regard human affairs, our duties to each other, and all creatures and concerns that are submitted to our care and controul."<sup>28</sup> In a word, nature, next to being a source of aesthetic delight to him, was also a guide to moral conduct.<sup>29</sup> If he emphasized the benevolence of birds and other animals and spoke even

<sup>26</sup> These grammatical errors are corrected in the Van Doren text, which also employs a more modern system of punctuation.

<sup>27</sup> *Travels*, xxxi-xxxii.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>29</sup> One cannot help noting the striking similarity between Bartram's philosophy of nature and Emerson's as expressed in "Nature," with its grand divisions into Nature as Commodity, Nature as Beauty, Nature as Language, Nature as Discipline, etc. It has already been noted (see Preface) that Carlyle had called Emerson's attention to Bartram's *Travels* in enthusiastic terms, but that was after Emerson had published his *Nature*. For a detailed treatment of Bartram's influence on English and American literature see Part III and Conclusion.



of the rattle-snake as of a "generous" and "magnanimous" creature<sup>30</sup> — thereby unwittingly stimulating Coleridge's poetic imagination — it was partly because he believed that as a matter of simple justice man owed all animals humane treatment. All animal creation is peaceably disposed "towards mankind, whom they seem to venerate,"<sup>31</sup> why cannot mankind reciprocate?

The history of man's attitude towards animals merits a separate study. Here it is but necessary to point out the obvious fact that man's treatment of animals follows man's philosophical attitude towards them. It is also quite obvious that no movement starts suddenly in a certain year, decade, or even century, without having roots in a previous period. What is commonly designated as the humanitarian impulse of the eighteenth century can be traced here and there in the writings of earlier centuries. Is Montaigne, for instance, less humanitarian than Thomson?<sup>32</sup> It is nevertheless true that the impulse toward justice for the weak and oppressed, including animals, becomes more widespread in the eighteenth century and grows into what historians call a movement. By the time Bartram writes his plea for the Negro, the Indian, and the animal kingdom thousands of similar pleas are heard all around him. On this one point of the humane treatment of animals it is well to remember that the atmosphere in which Bartram moved, from his childhood on, prepared him for the championing of the views he held.

Bartram's father, in spite of his enthusiasm for all phases of natural science, was not a zoologist. He confessed that "As for the animals and insects, it is very few that I touch of choice, and most with uneasiness. Neither can I behold any of them, that have not done me a manifest injury, in their agonizing mortal pains without pity."<sup>33</sup> William Bartram testified that when he was with his father in the Catskill Mountains, a rattle-snake almost bit him, and John Bartram pleaded with their guide to spare the life of the snake.<sup>34</sup> The importance of the

<sup>30</sup> *Travels*, 264.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 268.

<sup>32</sup> For a treatment of Montaigne's contribution to the conception of a people good by nature, see Gilbert Chinard: *L'Exotisme Américain dans la Littérature Française au XVI Siècle*. Paris, 1911. Chapitre IX.

<sup>33</sup> "Sketch of John and William Bartram." *Popular Science Monthly*, XL, 834.

<sup>34</sup> *Travels*, 270.

father's influence on his son has already been stressed. William's own gentle, benign temperament and his Quaker precepts enhanced this influence. And the age in which he lived encouraged this impulse towards pity and sensibility. A few examples culled from eighteenth-century English poetry at once indicate the closeness of William Bartram to the thought currents of his age. Thomson pitied the hare hard beset

By death in various forms, dark snares, and dogs,  
And more un pitying men . . . (*Winter*, 257-260)

and questioned what the flocks had done to merit death? (*Spring*, 358-360) "And the plain ox," he asked further, "In what has he offended?" He whose toil

Patient and ever ready, clothes the land  
With all the pomp of harvest—shall he bleed,  
And struggling groan beneath the cruel hands  
Even of the clowns he feeds? (*Spring*, 364-368)

Henry Baker in *The Universe*, published in 1727—a year after Thomson's *Winter*—asserted that

Though to kill there may be some pretence,  
When raging hunger bids, or self-defence;  
No cause beside can justify the deed.  
'Tis murder if not urg'd by real need.

John Dyer thought that

Ev'n to the reptile every cruel deed  
Is high impiety. (*The Fleece*, II, 22-23)

Richard Jago mourned the death of a blackbird shot by a hunter. He apologized for mankind to both the dead blackbird and his surviving mate:

Divided pair! forgive the wrong,  
While I with tears your fate rehearse,  
I'll join the widow's plaintive song,  
And save the lover in my verse.  
(*The Blackbirds: An Elegy*)

Bartram, not being a rhymster, expressed his sentiments on the subject in terms which sound more sincere, though no less

ardent. His *Travels* contains numerous episodes, set down simply and without the slightest hint of self-consciousness, of his reactions to animals. He tells us that the feeling of pity grew upon him with age; that in his youth, for instance, when he accompanied his father on a journey into East Florida, he once almost stepped on a rattle-snake, then, hot with resentment, cut off a sapling and instantly "dispatched him." "At that time," he confesses, "I was entirely insensible to gratitude or mercy" (*Travels*, 271). He tells us how in later life he tried vainly to save the life of a bear cub, whose "continual cries" over the body of its parent affected him "very sensibly." "I was moved with compassion, and charging myself as if accessory to what now appeared to be a cruel murder, and endeavoring to prevail on the hunter to save its life, but to no effect! for by habit he had become insensible to compassion towards the brute creation" (pp. xxvi-xxvii). He tells us that on another occasion he pleaded for the lives of a herd of deer — and just as vainly, for his old friend, "though he was a sensible, rational and good sort of man, would not yield" to his philosophy (p. 200). And he tells with pride that once he did succeed in saving the life of a "formidable" rattle-snake which had suffered him and his friends "to pass many times by him during the night, without injuring us in the least" (p. 269). He expresses his horror at the "barbarous sport" he witnessed of beating out the brains of a young wolf with the butt of a gun (p. 398). He is happy that he succeeded in extorting a promise from a trader that his injured horse, "my old slave" as he affectionately calls him, whom he was obliged to leave behind, would be treated gently and not be made into a pack-horse (p. 443). He regrets that the "unfortunate" trout, which he must eat, must be caught by cheating (p. 108),<sup>35</sup> and he confides that even though a savanna crane made excellent soup, yet he is resolved that as long as he can get any other necessary food he will "prefer their seraphic music in the ethereal skies" (p. 221). And, finally, he prays to the "sovereign Lord" Whom it has pleased to "endue man with power and pre-eminence here on earth, and establish his dominion over all creatures," that man's understanding "may

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Thomson, *Spring*, ll. 403-441.

be so illuminated with wisdom, and our hearts warmed and animated with a due sense of charity, that we may be enabled . . . to perform our duty towards those submitted to our service and protection, and be merciful to them, even as we hope for mercy" (p. 101).

It has already been suggested that Bartram's impulse to study animals and to champion humane treatment for them owed a great deal of its intensity to his own kindly temperament, to the influence of his upbringing and his age, and to his keen sense of the beautiful and the unspoiled. These elements, and especially the last, also gave rise to his "primitivism," or to what is generally understood by this word—the assumption of the superiority of the primitive, the assumption of a Golden Age in the past, the admiration of the Noble Savage, of the unsophisticated and the innocent. If, as Hoxie Neale Fairchild states, the conceptions of a Golden Age and a Noble Savage represent "a protest against the evil incidental to human progress," a looking back "from the corruptions of civilization to an imaginary primeval innocence,"<sup>36</sup> then Bartram was quite an ardent protestant. Everywhere in his writings are exclamations against the ravages of civilization on the face of nature and the mind and heart of nature's child, the Indian.

Primitive nature is beautiful. The landscape on the banks of the "Alatamaha" charms Bartram with its "scenes of primitive nature, as yet unmodified by the hand of man" (*Travels*, p. 49). In order to continue his travels he actually has to "break away" from an "enchanted little Isle of Palms," a "blessed unviolated spot of earth!" (p. 157). Even deserts, "vast spaces of gravel and plains of flat rocks . . . entirely destitute of vegetation," appeal to him, for soon he comes upon groves of "low, spreading Live Oaks, Zanthoxilon, Ilex, Sideroxilon, &c. and here and there . . . the pompous Palm tree, gloriously erect or gracefully bowing towards the earth," and he finds the contrast "pleasing" and a "wild Indian scene of primitive unmodified nature, ample and magnificent" (p. 243). His love of "unmodified nature" affects him with "extreme regret, at beholding the destruction and devastation which has been committed, or indiscreetly exer-

<sup>36</sup> *The Noble Savage*. Columbia University Press, 1928, p. 2.



cised on those extensive, fruitful Orange groves, on the banks of St. Juan, by the new planters under the British government, some hundred acres of which, at a single plantation, has been entirely destroyed to make room for the Indigo, Cotton, Corn, Batatas, &c. or as they say, to extirpate the musquitoes, alledging that groves near their dwellings are haunts and shelters for those persecuting insects; some plantations have not a single tree standing, and where any have been left, it is only a small coppice or clump, nakedly exposed and destitute . . . exhibiting a mournful, sallow countenance; their native perfectly formed and glossy green foliage as if violated, defaced and torn to pieces by the bleak winds, scorched by the burning sun-beams in summer, and chilled by the winter frosts" (pp. 253-54). This "devastation and destruction" is all the more borne in on him by the contrast between what some places once were and what they have become. At Mount Royal, overlooking Lake George, stationing himself near an ancient Indian mount, he compares the place as it appeared to him when he had first visited it fifteen years before, "at which time there were no settlements of white people, but all appeared wild and savage; yet in that uncultivated state it possessed an almost inexpressible air of grandeur, which was now entirely changed" (p. 99). "All," he laments, "has been cleared away and planted with indigo, corn and cotton," and that too abandoned. The place now appeared like a desert. Yet he is quick to give credit to the late proprietor, who had had "some taste, as he has preserved the mount and this little adjoining grove inviolate" (p. 100).

Bartram is no less grieved at the effect of civilization on the Indian, the favorite child of nature. The aesthetic element colors his treatment of everything connected with nature. It can be said that his Indians are part of the landscape he describes; they exist in the unviolated nature he so much admires. This attitude leads him to elegaic expressions over the decay of a Golden Age due to the coming of white traders and settlers. There can be no question of the sincerity of his descriptions, yet some of them sound like the effusions of a Utopian traveller rather than the report of a naturalist explorer. Here is a description of an Indian plain:



How happily situated is this retired spot of earth! What an elysium it is! where the wandering Siminole, the naked red warrior, roams at large, and after the vigorous chase retires from the scorching heat of the meridian sun. Here he reclines, and reposes under the odorous shades of *Zanthoxilon*, his verdant couch guarded by the *Diety*; *Liberty*, and the *Muses*, inspiring him with wisdom and valour, whilst the balmy zephyrs fan him to sleep (p. 107).

And here is a further glimpse of the blessed state of the Seminole:

They seem to be free from want or desires. No cruel enemy to dread; nothing to give them disquietude, but the gradual encroachments of the white people. Thus contented and undisturbed, they appear as blithe and free as the birds of the air, and like them as volatile and active, tuneful and vociferous. The visage, action and deportment of a Siminole, being the most striking picture of happiness in this life; joy, contentment, love and friendship, without guile or affectation, seem inherent in them, or predominant in their vital principle, for it leaves them but with the last breath of life (p. 212).

And this is his comment on the Cherokees:

. . . happy people; I mean happy in their dispositions, in their apprehensions of rectitude with regard to our social or moral conduct: O divine simplicity and truth, friendship without fallacy or guile, hospitality disinterested, native, undefiled, unmodified by artificial refinements! (pp. 350-51).

That the beauty of the landscape influences Bartram's ecstatic idealizations of Indian life is quite clear. All his descriptions either start or are intertwined with landscape. After a while the actual, observed landscape and the induced idealization become fused until his Indian territories partake of the light that shines on all Glittering Plains, Typees, and Green Mansions. Here is a view from a hill:

. . . a vast expanse of green meadows and strawberry fields; a meandering river gliding through, saluting in its various turnings the swelling, green, turfy knolls, embellished with parterres of flowers and fruitful strawberry beds; flocks of turkeys strolling about them; herds of deer prancing in the meads or bounding over the hills; companies of young, innocent Cherokee virgins, some busy gathering the rich fragrant fruit, others having already filled their baskets, lay reclined under the shade of floriferous and fragrant native bowers of *Magnolia*, *Azalea*, *Philadelphus*, perfumed *Calycanthus*, sweet Yellow *Jessamine* and cerulean

*Glycine frutescens*, disclosing their beauties to the fluttering breeze, and bathing their limbs in the cool fleeting streams; whilst other parties, more gay and libertine, were yet collecting strawberries, or wantonly chasing their companions, tantalising them, staining their lips and cheeks with the rich fruit.

The sylvan scene of primitive innocence was enchanting . . . (pp. 356-57).

Enchanting, however, as these idyllic pictures of Utopian Elysiums are, whose fascination captured the imaginations of the English Romantic poets, there is another side to Bartram, a side which is just as important in a proper understanding and evaluation of his work. It is his practical knowledge of the products and uses of landscape, paralleling, as it were, his scientific curiosity and observation. When he is not a poet carried away by the glorious aspects of nature he is not a primitivist, but a shrewd realist living in an enterprising age and having a utilitarian perspective. One illustration will suffice:

This vast plain together with the forests contiguous to it, if permitted (by the Siminoles who are sovereigns of these realms) to be in possession and under the culture of industrious planters and mechanics, would in a little time exhibit other scenes than it does at present, delightful as it is; for by the arts of agriculture and commerce, almost every desirable thing in life might be produced and made plentiful here, and thereby establish a rich, populous, and delightful region; as this soil and climate appears to be of a nature favourable for the production of almost all the fruits of the earth, as Corn, Rice, Indigo, Sugar-cane, Flax, Cotton, Silk, Cochineal, and all the varieties of esculent vegetables; and I suppose no part of the earth affords such endless range and exuberant pasture for cattle, deer, sheep, &c. the waters every where, even in the holes in the earth abound with varieties of excellent fish; and the forests and native meadows with wild game, as bear, deer, turkeys, quail, and in the winter season geese, ducks and other fowl; and lying contiguous to one of the most beautiful navigable rivers in the world and not more than thirty miles from St. Mark's on the great bay of Mexico; is most conveniently situated for the West-India trade, and the commerce of all the world (pp. 234-35).

This side of Bartram includes a study of the Indian not merely as an item in landscape but as a group of ethnological entities, having specific manners and customs and psychological reactions to the business of living. The contribution of Bartram in this field merits more detailed attention.

## CHAPTER III

### STUDIES OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN

Among the many literary productions on the American Indian, Bartram's work occupies a place of its own. He gathered his information at first hand; he traveled in parts of the country inhabited by Indians who, in his day, were still practically untouched by civilization; he lived among them, studied their languages and customs, and learned to distinguish between tribes and individuals. What is the value of Bartram's testimony, of his contribution to our knowledge of the Indians?

Benjamin Bissell, in his study of the American Indian as an object of literary idealization,<sup>1</sup> refers to Bartram's *Travels* for illustration of his thesis. Intent on proving Professor Babbitt's doctrine that eighteenth-century romanticism, or Rousseauism, tended to confuse "the supernatural or super-rational with the natural," he cites Bartram's description of "the Indian's" government as an instance "where the naturalistic Utopia appears full-blown."<sup>2</sup> Admitting that Bartram's descriptions of the beauties of external nature "have been much admired, and are of some importance, because of their influence upon Wordsworth," he quotes long passages from the *Travels* to prove that "Sentimental exoticism seems to reach its height in William Bartram."<sup>3</sup> He concludes his chapter on "Civilization as Seen by the Savage" with Bartram's "fanciful portrait of a noble savage":

I saw a young Indian in the nation, who when present, and beholding the scenes of mad intemperance and folly by the white men in the town, clapt his hand to his breast, and with a smile, looking aloft as if struck with astonishment, and wrapt in love and admiration to the Deity, as who should say, O though Great and Good Spirit, we are indeed sensible of thy benignity and favour to us red men. We did not know before they came amongst us that mankind could become so

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<sup>1</sup> *The American Indian in English Literature of the Eighteenth Century*, Yale Studies in English, LXVIII, 1925.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 46-48.

base, and fall so below the dignity of their nature. Defend us from their manners, laws and power.<sup>4</sup>

The portrait is fanciful, to be sure, for Bartram could not definitely have known what the young Indian was thinking. And yet the meaning the passage conveys is not fanciful at all. Bartram had lived long enough among the Indians to know that a large element among the tribes looked with extreme displeasure upon the introduction by the white traders of what Colonel William Byrd, more than half a century before Bartram, had called "Kill Devil" rum,<sup>5</sup> and while this particular Indian may not at the moment have thought of the "mad intemperance" of the white man, the spirit of "the portrait" is nevertheless realistic.

The fundamental error that Dr. Bissell falls into in his discussion of Bartram's contribution to our knowledge of the American Indian lies in his failure to distinguish between Bartram's manner and his matter. Bartram does reflect certain tendencies that Professor Babbitt would call Rousseauistic; he was a romantic naturalist; sentimental exoticism is to be found in his writings; but he could also serve as a capital illustration of the late Professor Greenlaw's statement "that classic and romantic traits are inextricably mingled not only in the literature of the [eighteenth] century as a whole but in the work of individual writers."<sup>6</sup> Bartram's exuberant style, his enthusiasm for nature and primitive simplicity, may have led him to ascribe to his Indians "fanciful" soliloquies, but these "romantic" tendencies do not invalidate the facts he presents of the lives of the Indian tribes he came in contact with; while in his conclusion and judgments, based on these facts, he observes a rational restraint thoroughly "unromantic."

The manner of Bartram may have led Dr. Bissell to look upon him merely as an example of "sentimental exoticism," but it has not prevented other commentators from attaching

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 77. The quotation is from the *Travels*, p. 492.

<sup>5</sup> *History of the Dividing Line*, Publications of the North Carolina Historical Commission, 1929, p. 92.

<sup>6</sup> Edwin Greenlaw, "Modern English Romanticism." *Studies in Philology*, XXII, 538.



importance to Bartram's facts. As early as 1827 a reviewer of the *Travels* regretted that Bartram

had not written with a greater degree of systematic precision, and with fewer pages of exclamatory admiration at the beauties and wonders of Nature . . . We hardly observe the real value of the numerous facts he has collected, until we become sufficiently acquainted with the book to skip the passages that may be fairly styled notes of admiration. However, his work has a great deal of interesting matter in it, and will always be referred to as conveying a good general idea of the countries through which he passed.<sup>7</sup>

A more modern scientific investigator, John R. Swanton, of the American Ethnological Society, considers the *Travels* "one of our best early works upon this section. The fascination of his style," he continues, "and the atmosphere of mystery which he threw about the earthworks of the region visited combined to give his 'Travels,' and the theory of the Mound Builders along with it, a wide circulation."<sup>8</sup> It is true that Swanton refutes Bartram's theory, but it is to be noted that he uses Bartram's own facts with which to refute it. Bartram believed that the aboriginal mounds he had observed were built by a separate race of Mound Builders who had preceded the American Indians. This theory, according to Swanton, "was accepted and defended for a century afterwards by the greater number of antiquarians who touched upon the problem, continuing, indeed, until the intensive work in the mound area undertaken by Cyrus Thomas in the eighties . . ."<sup>9</sup> That any ethnological theory propounded a century and a half ago should prove, in the light of modern scholarship, erroneous is not at all remarkable. That Bartram should supply part of the ammunition with which to demolish his own conjectures is remarkable only when one fails to distinguish between Bartram the cautious scientific explorer, the meticulous amasser of facts, and Bartram the sentimental Quaker commentator, the eighteenth-century amateur philosopher. Swanton has an explanation of his

<sup>7</sup> *The American Quarterly Review*, II, 226.

<sup>8</sup> "The Interpretation of Aboriginal Mounds by Means of Creek Indian Customs." *Report of Smithsonian Institution*, 1927, p. 495.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 496.



own of how it happened "That his [Bartram's] theory should continue to flourish while his more important facts contradictory of it were overlooked,"<sup>10</sup> but it is not important here. What is important is the respect with which an eminent modern ethnologist views Bartram's facts.

That to Swanton Bartram's descriptions are of more than "some importance, because of their influence upon Wordsworth," is further proved by his references to the *Travels* in his *Indian Tribes of the Lower Mississippi Valley*<sup>11</sup> and his *Early History of the Creek Indians and their Neighbors*.<sup>12</sup> In the latter work he invokes Bartram's authority no less than fifty-three times, often quoting whole pages from the *Travels* to substantiate his conclusions. A brief examination of representative references to Bartram in Swanton's monograph cannot fail to indicate the extent and variety of Bartram's contribution to the study of the American Indian:

Bartram tells us that in his time the language of the Chiaha was entirely different from that of Kasihta, which we know to have been Muskogee, and in his list of Creek towns he includes it among those speaking Stinkard.

Wappoo, Wappo, Wapoo. . . . given by Bartram as the name of a tribe formerly living near South Carolina, which the Creeks had driven away.

Bartram, who visited Florida in 1777-78, speaks of the Yamasee Nation as entirely destroyed as a distinct body, and he thus describes the site on St. Johns River of what he terms "the last decisive battle":

That the town was considered important is shown by the Creek name which it bears, Tälwa, läko, "Big Town," and from Bartram's statement that it was the leading White or Peace town.

Bartram states that he crossed the Chattahoochee "at the point towns Chehaw and Usseta (Kasihta). These towns," he adds, "almost join each other, yet speak two languages, as radically different perhaps as the Muscogulge and Chinese."

Almost all that is known of later Oconee history is contained in the following extract from Bartram:

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 495.

<sup>11</sup> *Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin* 43 (1911).

<sup>12</sup> *Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin* 73 (1922).

Bartram's narrative gives, not merely the history of the Oconee, but a good account also of the beginnings of the Seminole as distinct from the Creeks.<sup>13</sup>

Bartram's contribution to the literature on the American Indian has generally been discussed in terms of his *Travels*. What he has to say of the Indians in that book constitutes the largest part of his contribution on the subject, but it is only a part. Another is a series of answers he wrote in 1789, before the publication of the *Travels*, to specific queries on Indians, presumably by his friend Dr. Benjamin S. Barton. The manuscript of these answers has had a complicated history. One version is contained in John Howard Payne's *Commonplace Book*, written in Bartram's handwriting and entitled "Answers to Queries about Indians by William Bartram."<sup>14</sup> Another version was published by E. G. Squier in 1853.<sup>15</sup> The two versions differ only in the sequence and arrangement of the questions and answers; the material is essentially the same, except that the published version was evidently edited by Squier with the intent of securing greater unity and coherence.

Squier in his Prefatory Note states that while he was writing a work on "Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi," the Bartram manuscript was placed in his hands. It had belonged to Dr. Samuel George Morton, of Philadelphia, who had received it from Mobile through the courtesy of "a gentleman whose name is forgotten, but who received it amongst the waste paper used as stowage, in a box of books, from some northern city." Squier believed that Dr. B. S. Barton, who "in his Memoir on the 'Origin of the American Nation,' p. 46, refers to a MS. by Bartram, on these subjects, in his possession," . . . was "the author of the inquiries submitted to Bartram, and the original proprietor of the MS. in question."<sup>16</sup> The American Ethnologi-

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12, 23, 106-7, 129, 169, 180-81.

<sup>14</sup> Among the *Bartram Papers* in the Library of the Pennsylvania Historical Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>15</sup> "Observations on the Creek and Cherokee Indians." By William Bartram. 1789. With Prefatory and Supplementary Notes. By E. G. Squier. *Transactions of the American Ethnological Society*, Vol. III, Part I. New York. 1853.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

cal Society, to whose attention Squier had brought the existence of this work, instructed him to obtain Dr. Morton's assent to its publication in the transactions of the Society. Squier himself admitted to having obtained from this manuscript "several interesting facts," which he embodied in his *Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley* and in his *Aboriginal Monuments of the State of New York*, both published by the Smithsonian Institution. His opinion of Bartram's scientific value is high. "Bartram," he writes, "is chiefly remembered as a naturalist and his reputation has hitherto rested upon his labors as a botanist. It is conceded, however, that he was a close accurate, and conscientious observer in other departments; and the following pages may consequently be regarded . . . as a valuable contribution to our . . . stock of archaeological and ethnological materials."<sup>17</sup> It is this work of Bartram's to which Swanton referred in his article on Bartram's theory of the mound builders.<sup>18</sup>

There is no material difference between these answers on the Creek and Cherokee Indians and the chapters devoted to the Indians in the *Travels*. In both Bartram is generally cautious in his statements and modest in his claims of exact knowledge. His letter to Barton, transmitting his answers to, presumably, the latter's queries, is characteristic:

Thus you have,

Sir,

My observations and conjectures on these matters, with all the truth and accuracy that my slender abilities will admit of, and without reserve. If they should not answer your wishes and expectations, I desire you will ascribe it to my misapprehension of the queries or lack of knowledge, etc., etc.<sup>19</sup>

In the *Travels*, however, Bartram is much more discursive and subjective than in these answers, in which he was pinned down to specific questions and which he wrote at a time when his eyesight was failing him and he suffered great pain.<sup>20</sup> Hence the purely scientific value of his observations among the Indians is more apparent in the *Answers* than in the *Travels*, and yet

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>18</sup> *Vide supra*.

<sup>19</sup> *Op cit.*, p. 9.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

one is but an abridgement of the material contained in the other.

It becomes necessary, then, in order to gain an accurate understanding of Bartram's contribution to our knowledge of the American Indian, to separate his subjective comments from his objective facts, the romanticist from the scholar, the rhapsodist from the observer. This is not always easy, for in Bartram's case especially, the style is certainly inseparable from the man, but it is not impossible. In the following passage, for example, the subjective and objective elements are not hard to separate:

A man goes forth on his business or avocations, he calls in at another town, if he wants victuals, rest or social conversation, he confidently approaches the door of the first house he chooses, saying, "I am come;" the good man or woman replies, "You are; its well." Immediately victuals and drink are ready; he eats and drinks a little, then smokes Tobacco, and converses either of private matters, public talks or the news of the town. He rises and says, "I go;" the other answers, "You go!" He then proceeds again, and steps in at the next habitation he likes, or repairs to the public square, where are people always conversing by day, or dancing all night, or to some more private assembly, as he likes; he needs no one to introduce him, any more than the black-bird or thrush, when he repairs to the fruitful groves, to regale on their luxuries, and entertain the fond female with evening songs.<sup>21</sup>

Eliminate the one word "good" and the pointed conclusions beginning, "he needs no one to introduce him"—which betray Bartram's Quaker benignity and love for informality—and all that remains is a strictly objective report of Indian social behavior. Again, in such a statement as this one:

They have songs to accompany their dances, of different classes, as, martial, bacchanalian and amorous, which last I must confess, are extravagantly libidinous, and they have moral songs, which seem to be the most esteemed and practised, and answer the purpose of religious lectures.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> *Travels*, 491.

<sup>22</sup> *Travels*, 506. The Van Doren reprint (p. 396), following the London edition of 1794, gives this passage in an "edited" form which makes for better English but does violence to Bartram's meaning. For a study of the different editions of the *Travels*, see N. B. Fagin, *Modern Language Notes*, May, 1931, pp. 288-91.



it is easy to discount Bartram's puritanical judgments as to the morality or immorality of the songs and dances of the Indians, and still learn that the Indians composed songs to harmonize with their various classes of dances.

There can be no question that the appeal which Bartram's *Travels* had for the Romantic poets was partly due to his Romantic point of view. He viewed nature as the source of perfection and he idealized primitive life. Yet he never falsified the facts of the primitive life he described. It is to be noted, that, unlike Dr. Bissell, Bartram never speaks of "the Indian" as one general entity, but is careful to distinguish between tribes and nations of Indians. The very title of his book specifies that he traveled through "the Cherokee Country, the extensive territories of the Muscogulges, or Creek Confederacy, and the country of the Chactaws." The published version of his answers to specific questions is entitled, "Observations on the Creek and Cherokee Indians." He tells us that the marriage ceremonies of the Indians "differ greatly in the various nations and tribes";<sup>23</sup> that the Muscogulges bury their deceased in the earth, whereas the Chactaws "pay their last duties and respect to the deceased in a very different manner";<sup>24</sup> that the Chactaws are "not so neat in the trim of their heads, as the Muscogulges are, and they are remarkably slovenly and negligent in every part of their dress";<sup>25</sup> that the Muscogulge language is "very agreeable to the ear, courteous, gentle and musical; the letter R is not sounded in one word of their language . . .," whereas the Cherokee language, "on the contrary, is very loud, somewhat rough and very sonorous, sounding the letter R frequently."<sup>26</sup>

A study of Bartram's work, such as is here indicated, reveals the truly scientific quality of his observation. Eliminate his eighteenth-century diction, both neo-classic and Romantic, and his philosophical deductions and digressions, and the residue is accurate information. The attitude with which he seeks his information is the same that actuates modern scholarship. He forms no *a priori* judgments. By way of illustration, it is inter-

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 514.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 515-16.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 517.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 519.



esting to contrast him with his father in their respective attitudes toward the Indians. John Bartram had come to the conclusion that "The most probable and only method to establish a lasting peace with the barbarous Indians is to bang them soundly, and to make them sensible that we are men whom they for many years despised as women."<sup>27</sup> William Bartram tells us that he was "induced, while traveling, . . . to associate" with the Indians, that "I might judge for myself whether they were deserving of the severe censure, which prevailed against them among the white people."<sup>28</sup>

If he finally became a special pleader for the Indian, it was not because he did not observe anything to condemn in their nature, manners or customs, but because he observed that they were unjustly treated. He relates an incident in which the Indians of Georgia were almost cheated out of more land than they had been obliged to cede to the whites when the surveyor's compass refused to point right and the Indian chiefs insisted that they knew better than the compass.<sup>29</sup> He relates another incident, of Indian depredations against white traders in East Florida. "It appeared," he adds, "upon a strict investigation of facts, that the affair had taken its rise from the licentious conduct of a few vagrant young hunters of the Seminole nation, who, imagining themselves to have been ill treated, in their dealings with the traders (which by the bye was likely enough to be true) took this violent method of doing themselves justice."<sup>30</sup> He mentions a Mr. Galahan, a trader in the Cherokee country who was "esteemed and beloved by the Indians for his humanity, probity and equitable dealings with them, which," he adds, "to be just and candid I am obliged to observe (and blush for my countrymen at the recital) is somewhat of a prodigy, as it is a fact, I am afraid too true, that the white traders in their commerce with the Indians, give great and frequent occasions of complaint of their dishonesty and violence."<sup>31</sup> He narrates a tragi-comic story of a trader who appealed to him for help against the Indians of his trading post. "It appeared," says Bartram, "that this son of Adonis,

<sup>27</sup> Middleton, "John Bartram, Botanist," *Scientific Monthly*, XXI, 203.

<sup>28</sup> *Travels*, xxxiii.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 353.

had been detected in an amorous intrigue, with the wife of a young chief, the day after his arrival: the chief being out on a hunt, but arrived next day, who upon information of the affair, and the fact being confirmed, he with his friends and kindered resolved to exact legal satisfaction which in this case is cutting off both ears of the delinquent, close to the head." <sup>32</sup>

The vivid, intimate glimpses of Indian life contained in these stories of white and Indian relations do not diminish in value because they were apparently designed to support Bartram's general plea, expressed in his Introduction, for a humane governmental policy towards the Indians. Incidentally, his suggestion, it is to be noted, is in harmony with his attitude in support of impartial investigation and scientific truth. In modest but clear terms he points out that the best way of dealing with the Indians is not, as his father had advised, "to bang them stoutly," but to send

men of ability and virtue, under the authority of government, as friendly visitors into their towns; let these men be instructed to learn perfectly their languages, and by a liberal and friendly intimacy, become acquainted with their customs and usages, religious and civil; their system of legislation and police, as well as their most ancient and present traditions and history. These men thus enlightened and instructed would be qualified to judge equitably, and when returned to us, to make true and just reports, which might assist the legislature of the United States to form, and offer to them a judicious plan for their civilization and union with us.<sup>33</sup>

Knowledge, then, he believed, is the first step towards justice.

An indication of the breadth of Bartram's interest in the Indians may be gained from the topics he discussed. Besides the numerous observations, anecdotes, and generalizations relating to Indians scattered throughout the *Travels*, he appended to that book, as Part IV, "An Account of the Persons, Manners, Customs, and Government of the Muscogulges or Creeks, Cherokees, Chactaws, &c. Aborigines of the Continent of North America." Under this general heading he discusses in short chapters the Character, Customs and Persons of the American Aborigines; their Government and Civil Society; their Dress;

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 447-48.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, xxxiv.

Feasts and Divertisements; Property, Agriculture, Arts and Manufactures; their Marriage and Funeral Ceremonies; their Language and Manners. In his *Observations* he answers specific questions on the origin and migrations of certain tribes, on Indian painting, religion, the condition of women, ancient mounds, diseases, food, fossil remains.

His discussion of these subjects is always clear and definite. Vague terms and generalization he disliked. He criticized the historians who had said that the American aborigines had "every thing in common, and no private property; which," he complained, "are terms in my opinion too vague and general, when applied to these people."<sup>34</sup> He himself was given to philosophical generalizations and often yielded to the lusciousness of diction; possessed of keen aesthetic perceptions he could not help merging his Indians into the landscape of tropical luxuriance he was so fond of. Yet underneath his lucious paintings the amount of factual observation is both great and sound and his Indians, instead of remaining merely Noble Savages, remain ordinary Creeks, Cherokees, Choctaws, or Chickasaws.

The pioneer nature of his work can best be illustrated by comparing the writings of a few of his predecessors, their dogmatism and, especially, their credulity, with his conservatism and careful rejection of everything not absolutely verifiable or at least creditable. John Lawson did not hesitate to repeat the story of a cure effected by a conjuror who performed some hocus-pocus with a string of beads which "turned up as an ell would do, and without any motion of his they came all up (in a lump) under his Hand, and hung so for a considerable time, he never closing his Hand, and at length returned to their pristine Length and Shape." The performance and the cure, Lawson assured us, were "Matters of Fact" and he offered to "prove the truth thereof by several substantial Evidences, that are Men of Reputation, there being more than a dozen present when it was performed; most of whom are now alive."<sup>35</sup> Cap-

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 511.

<sup>35</sup> *The History of Carolina; Containing the Exact Description and Natural History of that Country: Together with the Present State thereof. And a*

tain Jonathan Carver did not hesitate to repeat a story told him by a French trader of an Indian who had adopted a rattle-snake and "treated it as a Deity." One day in October the Indian set his snake at liberty, and instructed him "to be sure . . . and return . . . in the month of May following." The snake kept his unvoiced promise. "The French gentleman," Carver concludes, "vouched for the truth of this story, and from the accounts I have often received of the docility of those creatures, I see no reason to doubt his veracity."<sup>36</sup> It has been stated before that Carver's book is now regarded, in the words of Fairchild, "not as an authentic personal narrative, but as a compilation from various sources."<sup>37</sup> yet this fact does not lessen its value for purposes of comparison with Bartram's work. If all his stories came out of other travelers' books—which is unlikely—his own book is still significant, if for no other reason than that it went into twenty-three editions and translations.<sup>38</sup> One other story, illustrative of Carver's material and his reaction to it, may prove instructive. He was told, he relates, that in July, 1762, it rained an inky substance (which was later bottled and used as writing ink) on the city of Detroit, and "Soon after, the Indian wars . . . broke out in these parts." His apology for coupling these two events together is that "it is well known that innumerable well attested instances of extraordinary phenomena happening before extraordinary events have been recorded in almost every age by historians of veracity."<sup>39</sup>

It is a relief to turn from this naïve type of traveler and "observer" to Bartram. "All that I can say," he writes in reply to a question as to whether government among the Indians was elective or hereditary, "from my own observation, will amount to little more than mere conjecture, . . . for, at best, it will be but the apprehensions or conjectures of a traveller from cursory and superficial views, perhaps aided and perhaps led astray by

*Journal of a Thousand Miles, Travel'd thro' several Nations of Indians. Giving a particular Account of their Customs, Manners, &c.* London, 1714. Reprint of copy in the North Carolina State Library at Raleigh. Charlotte, 1903, p. 129.

<sup>36</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 44-45.

<sup>37</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 97-98.

<sup>38</sup> *Cambridge History of American Literature*, I, 192.

<sup>39</sup> *Op. cit.*, 152.



the accounts given him by traders or other white people, who have resided among them." <sup>40</sup> His distrust of "conjecture" and "accounts" extended to the Indians as well as to the white traders. "The Cherokees themselves," he reports, "are as ignorant as we are, by what people or for what purpose these artificial hills were raised; they have various stories concerning them, the best of which amount to no more than mere conjecture, and leave us entirely in the dark . . ." <sup>41</sup> Bartram, too, repeated accounts given him by others, but first he tried to verify them and carefully distinguished verified material from mere hearsay. He had heard it reported, he tells us, before he went among the Indians, that "when their parents through extreme old age, become decrepid and helpless," they are, "in compassion for their miseries," sent to the other world, "by a stroke of the tomahawk or bullet." Upon inquiry, he was assured by the traders "that they knew no instance of such barbarism, but that there had been instances of the communities performing such a deed at the earnest request of the victim." <sup>42</sup> As proof of the traders' assurances he offers an instance of the reverential treatment of a blind old man that he himself had witnessed.

If the literature of travel is, in the last analysis, as Professor Lane Cooper suggests, "to be understood in its bearing upon imagination and poetic art," <sup>43</sup> Bartram's contribution to the literature of travel exerted its influence upon imagination and poetic art not only by virtue of its vivid narrative and its descriptive power, but by virtue of its careful notes on history, geography, and on a multitude of related sciences. In an age when poetic imagination among travelers ran faster than their observation, Bartram, whose imagination could travel as fast as anyone's, strove to copy nature as it is before he painted it in the glowing colors he loved to use. His Indians are first of all definite American Indians, having a habitation and a name, before they are noble children of nature.

<sup>40</sup> *Observations on the Creek and Cherokee Indians*, p. 22.

<sup>41</sup> *Travels*, 367.

<sup>42</sup> *Travels*, 498-9.

<sup>43</sup> *Cambridge History of American Literature*, I, 185.



PART TWO

INTERPRETER OF THE AMERICAN  
LANDSCAPE



## CHAPTER I

### THE ELEMENTS OF BARTRAM'S LANDSCAPE

The landscape of Bartram is the luxuriant, indolent landscape of the South. Had he described New England or Canada, it is doubtful whether his style would be so luscious and his book so fascinating. Bartram himself was fascinated by the semi-tropical scenery of the region he explored, and he endeavored to transmit to others the fascination he felt. His *Travels* is an account of his experiences and observations in North and South Carolina, Georgia, and East and West Florida. The Southland appealed to him. "Nothing will do for him now," complained his father to Peter Collinson, "but he will be a planter upon St. Johns river about 24 miles from Augustine & 6 from the fort of Picolata."<sup>1</sup> Dr. Fothergill could not prevail upon him to explore Canada for botanical specimens; Bartram insisted upon going South. His intense curiosity urged him on toward the strange and the unknown, and his aesthetic sensibility drew him towards the picturesque. Canada offered him more of the commonplace; there nature is not so rich, colorful, and varied in her productions as in a semi-tropical country. Many years after his return from his journey he wrote to a "Dear Couzn" that decrepitude of old age had not erased the impressions he had received during his residence in the Carolinas.<sup>2</sup>

Whether Bartram be considered one of the romantic idealizers of nature or a scientific observer with an imaginative pen, in either case the latitude of his landscape must be taken into account. "A tropical element," maintains Bissell, "is essential to the full realization of the Arcadian dream."<sup>3</sup> What Bissell really means, is a "semi-tropical" element, since life in latitudes close to the Equator is hardly comfortable enough to con-

<sup>1</sup> Letter dated June the (date illegible), 1766, in the *Bartram Papers*, I.

<sup>2</sup> Letter, dated 1788, in the Simon Gratz Collection, Penn. Hist. Society, Philadelphia.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 4.

stitute the realization of an Arcadian dream. Even in the more temperate region which Bartram explored, he found that in the summer season "the air at mid-day . . . was insufferably hot and sultry" (*Travels*, 35). Aldous Huxley may be too positive in his assertion that a "voyage through the tropics would have cured" Wordsworth "of his too easy and comfortable pantheism,"<sup>4</sup> but he is right in emphasizing the relationship between climate and nature description. In Bartram's case, this relationship is important enough for us to attempt to determine just where he traveled, under what circumstances, and what places he describes.

The map which accompanies the *Travels* is of little use, since it covers but a small part of Bartram's route, the eastern coast of Florida, from the St. Johns River down to Cape Canaveral. But throughout his narrative he is specific enough to enable us to work out his itinerary, with a few difficulties arising from changes, with the years, of names of places mentioned. The book is divided into four Parts, of which only the first three tell a connected story of his travels; Part IV is an account of the different tribes of Indians he met, has a separate title page, and is really a sort of appendix. The total time consumed by his travels was four years and nine months: he left Philadelphia "in April, 1773" (*Travels*, p. 1), and returned to his father's house "on the banks of the river Schuylkill, within four miles of the city [Philadelphia], January 1778" (p. 480).

He sailed from Philadelphia by packet for Charleston, S. C. The first 150 miles, down the Delaware to Cape Henlopen, were a "pleasant run." Then he met with a sea storm, a phenomenon he loved to describe. His boat got into Charleston on the eleventh day after it left Cape Henlopen. From Charleston he sailed by coasting vessel for Savannah, from which port he set off by horse on one of his numerous little exploration trips. He went south to "the rising city of Sunbury" and to Fort Barrington on the "Alatamaha" River, passing, he tells us, through a level country, well watered by large streams . . . coursing from extensive swamps and marshes . . ." (p. 10). Next he went to "Darian," and on the way stopped at the plantation of a

<sup>4</sup> "Wordsworth in the Tropics." *Life and Letters*, I, 354.

"venerable grey headed Caledonian" named M'Intosh. Both Barrington and Darien are today in McIntosh County, Georgia. His next destination was St. Mary's. To get there he had to cross "an uninhabited wilderness" of "high pine forests" and "dark and grassy savannas" (p. 17). From there he returned to Mr. M'Intosh's plantation, where young John M'Intosh joined him on the next excursion. They went, on horse-back, up to Savannah and thence, following the course of the Savannah River, to Augusta, where they arrived in time to attend a Congress of Indians and whites, called for the purpose of ratifying a treaty. When, as a result of this treaty, a party of surveyors was sent to determine the boundaries of the new purchase, Bartram was invited by the Georgian leader to accompany them. He and M'Intosh, therefore, started out with the "caravan." On the evening of the second day they reached Wrightsborough, a Quaker village, about thirty miles west of Augusta (pp. 35-36). Four days later, at Buffalo Lick, Bartram records his impression of "This extraordinary place"—a promontory and below a large cane swamp and meadows (p. 39). The party followed the Broad River to the Savannah and then disbanded. Bartram returned to Augusta and from there to Savannah, rich in experiences and happy in his "very extensive collection of new discoveries of natural productions" (p. 47). The "remaining part of this season" he spent "in botanical excursions to the low countries, between Carolina and East Florida" (p. 48). He ascended the Altamaha in a cypress canoe, and reported his delight in the groves, meadows, forests, domestic herds, "the wary sharp-sighted crane," the wood-pelican, and the numerous other objects of nature that he saw on this trip.

Part II covers his travels in Florida. He left Savannah in March, 1774, having spent eleven months in Georgia, with a short stop in South Carolina. He sailed from Frederica, St. Simon Island, Georgia. Near Cumberland Island the captain of his boat, having been informed that the Indians in Florida were on the war-path, decided to turn back, but Bartram was determined to proceed, and he was accordingly put ashore on "Little St. Simon's," not far from Amelia Island, Florida (p. 64). His introductions procuring him assistance he next "set



sail in a handsome pleasure-boat, manned with four stout negro slaves, to row in case of necessity" (p. 70). In three days he was at Cow-ford, "a public ferry over St. Johns," where he bought "a neat little sailboat" for three guineas, and the next morning he sailed up the river (pp. 72-73). Here he admired the groves of live oaks, palms, laurel (*magnolia grandiflora*), and orange trees, but soon once more ran into a magnificent storm, with "furious" winds and "tremendous" thunder and lightning (p. 75). He skirted now the eastern and now the western ("or Indian") shore of the river, all the time noting the landscape, the "plunging alligators," and the incredible numbers of *ephemera*, small flying insects, "beautiful and delicately formed little creatures." He passed Fort Picolata and Charlottia, and arrived at the trading post where he stored his chest of specimens and other objects. With this trading-post as his headquarters he boldly set out to explore the Indian country round about. In the middle of May he followed, in his little vessel, a group of traders to Mount Royal, where the St. Johns River widens into Lake George, and where his boat "at once diminished to a nut-shell, on the swelling seas, and . . . must appear to the surprised observer, as some aquatic animal" (pp. 101-102). At the next trading-post, up the river, he spent several weeks, then, securing the services of an Indian, he started out again, but the Indian soon became tired of rowing and Bartram had to put him ashore. He sailed on alone, observing trees, promontories, and lagoons, and listening to the roar of crocodiles with whom he engaged in a thrilling battle. He turned into a "little river" and into Long Lake, finally arriving at a friend's plantation in New Smyrna, on the Musquito River. Here he saw "a vast fountain . . . of hot mineral water, . . . perfectly diaphonous" (p. 145). He then returned to his first trading-post headquarters. From this post he accompanied a trading company to the Seminole Indian town of Cuscowilla, capital of the Alachua tribe, in north-central Florida. Exploring the region, he came upon "the Great Sink," where crocodiles were "so abundant, that, if permitted by them, [he] could walk over any part of the bason . . . upon their heads, which slowly float and turn about like knotty chuncks or logs of wood"

(p. 205). His next trip took him beyond the Alachua savanna to "Talahasochte," thirty miles north of St. Marks. When he returned to the trading-post on the St. Johns he again set off "searching the shores" and was rewarded for his "assiduity in the society of beauties in the blooming realms of Florida" (p. 253). Finally he returned to Sunbury, Georgia, and from there to Charleston, where he planned his future travels.

In Part III Bartram narrates his travels in the Cherokee territories and the Chactaw country. On April 22, 1776, now three years after he left Philadelphia, he struck out for "the Cherokee nation." He made twenty-five miles the first day, arriving at "Jacksonburg" (Jacksonboro). He again went into Georgia, visited Savannah and Augusta, passed through Fort James Dartmouth, Wrightsborough, then followed the Savannah which, above the "Tugilo," was called Keowe. Here he observed "the flaming Azalea . . . illuminate the hill-sides" (p. 328), abundance of grape vines, and, finally, the Cherokee town of Sinika, on the South Carolina shore. He visited the "Oconne [Oconee] valley" and proceeded to the Cherokee mountains where he named a high peak Mount Magnolia, "from a new and beautiful species of that celebrated family of trees, which here . . . grows in a high degree of perfection" (p. 339). From Keowe (or Cowe), the Cherokee capital, he struck out, against the advice of the traders, for the dangerous Overhill towns, but after a short journey convinced himself that it would be wise to turn back. Once more he returned to Georgia, this time following a western route beyond the Flint River, "an arm of the great Chata Uche," where he was impressed with the extensive cane swamps and meadows, and where burning flies tormented the horses of the party of traders he had joined. He crossed into West Florida, then into Alabama, and followed the Tallapoosa and Alabama rivers, as far as "Taensa" (Tensas), where he took a boat for Mobile. He found the city, on July 31, 1776<sup>5</sup> "very hot and sultry," but stayed on till August 5th, when he returned to Taensa, where he contracted

<sup>5</sup> The first edition (Phila., 1791), p. 404, prints the year as "1778," which is obviously a misprint, as Bartram returned to his Philadelphia home in January, 1778 (p. 480). All subsequent editions repeat the misprint.

a fever. Before he was fully recovered he sailed from Mobile for Pensacola, Capital of Western Florida, where he was hospitably received by the governor. He returned to Mobile and found himself very ill. Yet the very next day he sailed west for the Pearl River, where he remained seriously ill for a considerable time. As soon as he felt able to travel he moved on westward as far as the Mississippi, on the banks of which "he stood for a time as it were fascinated by the magnificence of the great sire of rivers" (*Travels*, p.427). He arrived at Manchack, Louisiana, and from there visited Baton Rouge and was especially attracted by the numerous indigo, cotton, and rice plantations in the neighborhood. On August 27, 1777,<sup>6</sup> he set off for Point Coupé [Pointe Coupee], "a flourishing French settlement on the Spanish shore of the Mississippi." On November 13th, he sailed east again, twice ran aground, but managed to reach Mobile. On the 27th he left by boat for Taensa and from there by horse for Savannah. There he stopped long enough to revisit several districts in Georgia and the east borders of Florida. On one of these short side-trips he observed a flowering shrub "of the first order for beauty and fragrance of blossoms," which he named *Franklinia Alatomaha*, in honor of his father's friend Benjamin Franklin (*Travels*, p. 467). He returned to Charleston, thence to Cape Fear, North Carolina; Alexandria, Virginia; Georgetown, Maryland; Lancaster and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

It will be observed from this itinerary that Bartram is quite specific in naming the places he visited, the conveyances by which he traveled, and under what circumstances he observed the phenomena and objects he describes. The detailed character of his account deserves special emphasis. In spite of the strongly imaginative nature of his descriptions he always remains the practical explorer. Purely imaginative writers—poets, novelists, literati—when they turn traveler, are eager to record their impressions of the important sights they have seen; they concentrate on the "literary" material their travels have unearthed; the little practical details escape them. Bartram, how-

<sup>6</sup> The first edition prints the year as "1787," which is again an obvious misprint, this time not repeated by the later editions.

ever, finds it important enough to specify the kind of wood his canoe was made of, the depth of a stream he had to wade or swim across, and, above all, the layout of his camping place and what food he was able to procure.

To a practical explorer camping places are of great importance. After a day's weary traveling a resting site is a grave consideration. Upon it depend health and safety. Travelers of the type represented by Carver tell us that they had camped at a certain place only if some event of importance had occurred at that place. It is the event that is worthy of mention, not the camping place—unless it be a curious Indian town or an otherwise interesting locality. Often they will not bother to describe their camp even if something of importance did happen to them at that place. To cite a capital illustration, Carver, telling of a band of Indians who one night were about to plunder his canoe, indicates the place where this happened by the mere statement: "About ten days after I had parted from the traders, I landed as I usually did every evening, and having pitched my tent, I ordered my men, . . . to lay themselves down to sleep."<sup>7</sup> Such a vague "landing" never occurs in Bartram. With him a camp site is first of all a matter for "reconnoitering," before he spreads his "skins and blanket by [his] cheerful fire, under the protecting shade of the hospitable Live-oak" (*Travels*, p. 50). It is a matter of finding "a convenient and safe harbour," preferably "in a little lagoon, under an elevated bank" (p. 81), but if that be impossible, a "little cape of flat rocks" will do, especially if it afford "a comprehensive and varied scene . . ." (p. 175).

Bartram's camping places are part of his landscape, but they are also a practical necessity. A good site is one which feeds his aesthetic sensibility and at the same time affords shelter from the night and protection from attack. Sometimes he rejoices at finding just such a spot:

I fixed my camp in an open plain, near the utmost projection of the promontory, under the shelter of a large Live Oak, which stood on the highest part of the ground and but a few yards from my boat. From this open, high situation, I had a free prospect of the river, which was

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<sup>7</sup> J. Carver, *op. cit.*, p. 51.



a matter of no trivial consideration to me, having good reason to dread the subtle attacks of the alligators, who were crowding about my harbour (p. 117).

At other times ideal camping sites are not to be had and he is obliged to content himself with the next best he could find:

I had now swamps and marshes on both sides of me, and evening coming on apace, I began to look out for high land to encamp on, but the extensive marshes seemed to have no bounds; and it was almost dark when I found a tolerable suitable place, and at last was constrained to take up with a narrow strip of high shelly bank, on the West side (pp. 133-135).

In fact, a good camping place sometimes determines the length of Bartram's stay at a given place. Thus when he finds

a grassy knoll or eminence, under the cover of spreading Oaks, just by the grotto or sink of the lake, which lay as a sparkling gem on the flowery bosom of the ample savanna . . .

he continues his stay "at this place for several days, ranging around the delightful country to a great distance" (p. 241). That the selection of a camping place was not determined by aesthetic considerations alone is clear. Several pages later in the same chapter he tells us that one evening he and his party "encamped as usual, near the banks of savannas and ponds, for the benefit of water and accommodation of pasture for our creatures" (p. 251).

Of equal importance to the practical explorer, the experienced traveler, is the procuring of food. Natural scenery can be enjoyed only after the more substantial necessities of physical life have been obtained. Bartram is always specific about food, and there is a direct connection between his enumeration of what he ate, his description of how he often procured and prepared his food in the wilderness, and the appeal that his narrative has exerted. There is an undeniable Robinson Crusoe appeal in the record of a brave wanderer progressing through a hostile and primitive country on foot, horseback or in a canoe, defending himself with gun or club in hand against strange wild animals, shifting for food and shelter, and cheerfully undergoing many adventures for the sake of his beloved science.



Yet Bartram's detailed discussion of food is in reality more than a Robinson Crusoe touch. It is in a point like this that he exemplifies the difference between the genuine explorer and the novelist or poet romanticising about the wilderness. Bartram is direct; he knows what part food plays in the life of the explorer. Along with the details of his camp site, he therefore sets down what he ate and under what circumstances. Thus he tells us that one afternoon, to escape a storm, he took "quiet possession" of an Indian hunting cabin and

finding some dry wood under shelter of the old cabin, I struck up a fire, dried my clothes, and comforted myself with a frugal repast of biscuit and dried beef, which was all the food my viaticum afforded me by this time, excepting a small piece of cheese which I had furnished myself with at Charleston and kept till this time (p. 344).

Another afternoon he ascended the bank of the river and found abundance of Peach and Fig trees, loaded with fruit, which affording a very acceptable dessert after the heats and toil of the day, and evening drawing on apace, I concluded to take up my quarters here for the night (p. 407).

Bartram, plain Quaker that he was, may have had a touch of the epicurean, but here it is necessary to emphasize the absolute realism of his travel account. It was not epicureanism that made him enter into his journal the fact that he had but a small piece of cheese left for future provision; it was the hard experience of a traveler who has sometimes hungered and consequently can appreciate the value of any kind of food. A more purely romantic traveler, such as Chateaubriand, may, upon his first arrival at a place, observe "mocking-birds and cardinal-birds flying about" \* rather than pay attention to his "viaticum," but Bartram spent five years in traveling, for the most part through a wilderness, and, besides observing the scenery, he learned enough about the realities of traveling to exclaim:

How supremely blessed were our hours at this time! plenty of delicious and healthful food, our stomachs keen . . . (*Travels*, 110-111)

or to rejoice at his good fortune in "having taken three young

\* *Travels in America and Italy*, I, 95.

racoons . . . , which are excellent meat" (p. 63). As a matter of fact, though, even Chateaubriand finds it necessary to mention on occasion that "A fire was kindled to cook our supper"<sup>9</sup> or that he "made a sorry supper."<sup>10</sup> But he is general and vague; where Bartram is selective and vivid. One *writes* of travels, the other *travels*.

Camping places and food, then, can not be overlooked in a consideration of the elements of Bartram's landscape. They lend an atmosphere of reality to his descriptions which purely imaginative writers do not have. They provide a basis of truth for our appreciation of his more exalted descriptions. Starting with these practical objects, because of their immediate appeal to him, he is free to indulge his other interests, which were numerous and varied. Professor Lane Cooper's phrase about Bartram's eye "that nothing escapes"<sup>11</sup> is indeed justified almost literally. Animals and vegetation, men and manners, Indian mounds and birds' nests, the play of light or the raging of a storm, everything attracts his attention and leaves a sharp impression on his mind. It is possible, however, to reduce Bartram's interests to some classifiable order by saying that they comprehend three types: scientific, aesthetic, and philosophical. The landscape, therefore, that Bartram has depicted is the result of the observation of a scientist, poet, and philosopher, a combination which was unique in his day and which has kept his work alive into our own day.

As a scientist Bartram specialized in botany, although the term "natural science," which was most often applied to his profession, in Bartram's day covered a multitude of other scientific fields. It is true, nevertheless, that the "vegetable kingdom" came first among his interests and that his travels were undertaken for the purpose of discovering "rare and useful productions of nature" chiefly in that kingdom (*Travels*, 1). That he did not narrowly confine himself to the main purpose, but loitered along, watching the stars, and alligators, and Indians, and hundreds of other objects outside of the vegetable kingdom, was a loss to Dr. Fothergill, who paid for these trav-

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119.

<sup>11</sup> *Cambridge History of American Literature*, I, 196.

els, but a gain to all others to whom nature generally and richness and variety of landscape especially are of interest. Yet he accomplished his main purpose—and more. He shipped many cases of specimens to his London patron, and apparently overlooked very little, but the true vegetable kingdom of Bartram remains in the pages of his book.

Bartram saw trees. Magnolias fascinated him, and the *magnolia grandiflora* is the first tree he mentions, along with other species he has observed—"Magnolia glauca, Magnolia pyramidalis" (p. 6). Often he combines an aesthetic description with his scientific specifications: "The Laurel Magnolia . . . are the most beautiful and tall that I have any where seen . . . Their usual height is about one hundred feet . . . The flowers are . . . in the center of a coronet of dark green, shining, ovate pointed entire leaves: they are large, perfectly white, and expanded like a full blown Rose" (pp. 85-86). Another favorite tree of his was the *Gordonia lasianthus*, which, again he either merely names among other trees or describes subjectively: "The tall, aspiring Gordonia lasianthus, which now stood in my view in all its splendour, is every way deserving of our admiration . . . Its thick foliage, of a dark green colour, is flowered over with large milk-white fragrant blossoms . . ." (p. 161). His discovery of a new tree is an occasion for several paragraphs. Thus he describes a tree which he had at first accepted to be a species of *Gordonia* but finally convinced himself that it belonged to a "new tribe," which he named *Franklinia Altamaha*. "This very curious tree," he informs us, "was first taken notice of about ten or twelve years ago, at this place, when I attended my father on a botanical excursion; but, it being then late in the autumn, we could form no opinion to what class or tribe it belonged. We never saw it grow in any other place" (pp. 467-468).

A complete list of all the trees Bartram describes would fill a fair-sized botanical dictionary. Naturally enough, he paid especial attention either to uncommon species of trees often seen in his home region or to tropical and semi-tropical trees. He tells us that the "Carica papaya, both male and female," at one time claimed his "whole attention," and that he thought

it "the most beautiful of any vegetable production" he knew of; he believed that not even the "towering Laurel Magnolia, and exalted Palm . . . exceed it . . . in elegance, delicacy, and gracefulness" (p. 131). He remarks that the cypress "stands in the first order of North American trees" (p. 90), and that on passing by a swamp he had observed a species of cypress which "differs little from the white Cedar of New-Jersey and Pennsylvania (*Cypressus thyoides*)" (p. 411). The *halesia diptera* reminds him of "our common wild Mulberry" (p. 410). The *Nyssa coccinea*, he thinks, should be seen in the autumn, "when their fruit is ripe, and the tree divested of its leaves; for then they look as red as scarlet, with their fruit," and he informs us that "The most northern settlement of this tree, yet known, is on the Great Ogeeche, where they are called Ogeeche limes" (p. 17). The live oaks of the South appeal to him by their "astonishing magnitude." Once he reports that he had "stepped about fifty paces, on a straight line, from the trunk of one of these trees, to the extremity of the limbs" (pp. 84-85). He notes palm trees whose "straight trunks are sixty, eighty or ninety feet high, with a beautiful taper of a bright ash colour, until within six or seven feet of the top, where it is a fine green colour, crowned with an orb of rich green plumed leaves" (p. 116). A species of *Robinia* attracts his attention because it displays "a singular pleasing wildness and freedom in its manner of growth" (p. 335).

Shrubs, flowers, and other plants are even more numerous than trees in Bartram's landscape, and again the emphasis is on tropical plants or on the uncommon species of semi-tropical and temperate plants. He observes "a new and most beautiful species of *Annona*, having clusters of large white fragrant flowers" (p. 18). He guesses that a certain "admirably beautiful and singular" evergreen shrub is a species of *Cacalia* (p. 164). He is impressed by the strength of the *Cactus opuntia*, which can support the weight of a man (p. 163). The *Cana* (sic) *Indica* presents to him "a glorious shew," the stem rising "six, seven and nine feet high, terminating upwards with spikes of scarlet flowers" (p. 426). A species of *Cleome* attracts him by its "very strong scent, somewhat like Gum Assafetida," and



he remarks that notwithstanding the "scent," the inhabitants give it a place in soups and sauces" (p. 425). The "prickly limbs" of the *Erythryna corallodendrum* "stride and wreath about with singular freedom, and its spikes of crimson flowers have a fine effect amidst the delicate foliage" (p. 162). He notes that the "flame coloured flowers" of the *Gerardea* "give the plant a very splendid appearance, even at a great distance" (pp. 412-413). He describes several species of *Hibiscus*; one whose large and expanded flowers are "pale yellow and white, having a deep crimson eye" (p. 19); another which grows to the "size and figure of a beautiful little tree" and whose flowers are crimson (p. 104); still another which has flowers "of a fine damask rose colour" (p. 105); and still another whose flowers are "of a moderate size, and of a deep splendid yellow" (p. 104). A "very singular and beautiful shrub," presumably a species of *Hydrangia*, receives a long paragraph of minute description (p. 382). So does a species of *Ipomea*, whose "beautiful flowers are of a perfect rose colour, elegantly besprinkled on the inside of their petals with crimson specks" (p. 377). A "beautiful species of *Lantana*" is described by its colors and "most agreeable scent" (pp. 103-104). A species of *Malva* is characterized by the adjective "charming" and by the color-scheme of its flowers (p. 327). There is something of the curiosity-hunter in Bartram's description of the wild lime shrub, which has small flowers "of a greenish yellow colour, and sweet scented." This shrub, Bartram informs us, was named by his father "tallow-nut," because of its "large oval fruit" which "covers a nut . . . enclosing a white kernel somewhat of the consistence and taste of the sweet Almond, but more oily and very much like hard tallow" (p. 115). Similarly he describes a species of *Myrica*, a "beautiful evergreen shrub, which the French inhabitants [in the neighborhood of Mobile] call the Wax tree," because of its fruit, an "abundance of large round berries, nearly the size of bird cherries, which are covered with a scale or coat of white wax" (p. 405). He takes issue with the people of Louisiana who claim that the Humble plant (*Mimosa pudica*) is indigenous to their region; he has not seen it "growing wild in the forests and fields, and it differs in no



respect from that which we protect in green houses and stoves" (p. 430). The *Mimosa sensitiva*, he believes, is "as admirable, and more charming than the celebrated Humble plant, equally chaste and fearful of the hasty touch of the surprised admirer" (p. 24). His reaction to color is dramatic. One morning, he narrates, he was "struck with surprise at the appearance of a blooming plant, gilded with the richest golden yellow." Upon examination it proved to be a new species of *Oenothera*, "perhaps the most pompous and brilliant herbaceous plant yet known to exist" (p. 406). He notes the scandent fern, "a delicate plant, of a yellowish lively green," which "would be an ornament in a garden" (p. 478); the "flaming azalea"; the "incarnate Robinia"; and the "snowy mantled Philadelphus" (p. 336).

The trees, shrubs, and flowers which Bartram describes do not always appear in his landscape individual and isolated. The naturalist isolates his objects for scientific study and description. But Bartram is an amateur traveler as well as a naturalist, and his description has poetic connotations. His objects come to him merged with the landscape as unbroken impressions, before he proceeds to dismember them for scientific classification. Thus his trees, shrubs, and flowers often come to him in forests and groves and fields and meadows, and he describes them from the outside, as it were, before he approaches them and the forest is lost in the trees that stand out. He notes the high forests as he sails up the St. Johns and they present to him "a grand and sublime appearance, the earth rising gradually from the river Westward, by easy swelling ridges, behind one another, lifting the distant groves up into the skies" (p. 90). The orange groves, which he sees everywhere in the lower South, hold a special interest for him; he mentions them again and again. Other fruit trees attract him: olive, almond, fig, peach, prune (p. 337). He exclaims at the frequency with which he comes upon groves of dogwood. "During a progress of near seventy miles," he says, "there constantly presented to view on one hand or the other, spacious groves of this fine flowering tree, which must, in the spring season, when covered with blossoms, present a most pleasing scene" (p. 401). His impressions of

forests are not without subjective coloring. At one time he is grateful for the shade afforded him by "incomparable forests" (p. 336); at another time he hears the "awful reverential harmony" of "the high lonesome forests," a harmony "inexpressibly sublime, and not to be enjoyed any where, but in these native wild Indian regions" (p. 180). The magnificence of "stately" pines pleases him all the more because he has just traversed "expansive wild plains" (p. 173).

The "plains" of Bartram are not, however, as barren as the last quotation might suggest. Even his "endless wastes" produce "a few shrubby, crooked Pine trees" and "clumps of mean shrubs" (p. 242), and even in the "most dreary, solitary desert waste" he had ever beheld, there is a thin scattering of grass and a few "Pines, Oaks, Olives and Sideroxilons"—though "poor, misshapen and tattered" (p. 218). Yet he is naturally more voluble when crossing fields, meadows, lawns, green savannas, even marshes and swamps. He notes shrubs, flowers, "herbage," vines, "plants," grasses; in one plain, "a vast profusion of herbage" (p. 180); in another, "the most extensive Cane-break (or Cane meadows) that is to be seen on the face of the whole world" (p. 233). He observes that "a new and beautiful species of *Verbena* . . . grows in old fields where there is a good soil" (p. 436). He asks, rhetorically, the reader to observe "these green meadows" which "seem enamelled with the beds of flowers," which he then proceeds to enumerate (p. xviii). He calls attention to "a very great curiosity," a new "and very elegant" species of *Sarcinia* growing plentifully in the level, wet savannas near Pensacola (p. 417). In a planter's "spacious" garden, in Louisiana, he observes "many useful as well as curious exoticks, particularly the delicate Tube-rose. . . . In one corner of the garden was a pond or marsh, round about which grew luxuriantly the Scotch grass . . ." (pp. 429-430).

It is true, nevertheless, that mountains and promontories stir Bartram more profoundly than the most luxuriant fields. They afford him a panoramic view of the countryside, widen his horizon, and appeal to his sense of the majestic. Standing upon an elevated peak in the Jore mountains, he beholds "with rapture

and astonishment, a sublimely awful scene of power and magnificence, a world of mountains piled upon mountains" (p. 362). Often as he travels his eyes seek the "alternate, bold promontories and misty points advancing and retiring, at length, as it were, insensibly vanishing from sight, like the two points of a crescent, softly touching the horizon" (pp. 233-234). However, like the trees in his landscape, his promontories seldom appear isolated. They are described along with the forests that grow upon them, the animals that inhabit them, and the streams that cascade down them. As he sails the Altamaha he notices "the winding banks of the river and the high projecting promontories," and he hears the "deep forests and distant hills re-echo the chearing social lowings of domestic herds" (p. 49). Ascending the St. Johns River he observes the high hills, or bluffs, on its banks and offers a conjecture as to their probable origin (p. 165). The cliffs of the Natchez "present to view stratas of clay, marle and chalk, of all colours, as brown, red, yellow, white, blue and purple" (p. 435). Mention must also be made of Bartram's descriptions of Indian mounds, which are an important part of his landscape. Besides devoting the final chapter of his *Travels* to a study of these antiquities, he notes them in passing wherever he comes upon them.

So far the elements of Bartram's landscape which have been discussed have all been connected with land. Bartram is equally observant of anything connected with water. Bodies of water—the ocean, numerous rivers, lakes, creeks, lagoons, pools, fountains, springs, geysers—flow and shimmer through his descriptions. The Atlantic Ocean receives an ecstatic paragraph in the first chapter of his book. It is "sublime, awful, and majestic." It exhibits a "tremendous scene" when stormy; it is "sublime" when it has again "become calm and pacific"; it is "luminous" at night, "when all the waters seem transmuted into liquid silver" (pp. 2-3). An immense number of rivers figure in his narrative, beginning with those close to his home, the Schuylkill, the Delaware, the Susquehanna, and continuing with the more southern and western rivers: the Clarendon, the Haw, Little, Tugilo, Musquito, Chata Uche (or Apalachucla), Tallapoosa, Alabama, Taensapaoa, Amite, Cooper, Oakmulge, Ocone,

Tombigbee, Perdido, Mobile, Flint, Meherren, St. Johns, St. Mary, Little St. Juan, Savannah, Altamaha, Broad, Pearl, Mississippi. We have noted the effect upon him of his first glimpse of the Mississippi, an effect very similar to Keat's image of the effect upon "Stout Cortes" of a first glimpse of the Pacific. This effect, in Bartram's case, must be attributed to his sense of the majestic or, what he calls, the magnificent. Not only the depth and the width of the Mississippi astonish him, but also "the altitude, and theatrical ascents of its pensile banks." These things and "the steady course of the mighty flood, the trees, high forests, even every particular object, as well as societies, bear the stamp of superiority and excellence; all unite or combine in exhibiting a prospect of the grand sublime" (pp. 427-428).

In other words, the effect is due to the entire ensemble of sense impressions. The Broad River "winds through a fertile vale, almost overshadowed on one side by a ridge of high hills, well timbered with Oak, Hickory, Liriodendron, Magnolia acuminata . . ." (p. 44). The Altamaha is beautiful because on its elevated shores there rise to view "yon Magnolian groves, from whose tops the surrounding expanse is perfumed, by clouds of incense blended with the exhaling balm of the Liquid-amber, and odours continually arising from circumambient aromatic groves of Illicium, Myrica, Laurus and Bignonia" (p. 48). Similarly, the entire ensemble of impressions is responsible if a river is not "beautiful"—and there are such in Bartram's descriptions, although even those are described with a sense of enjoyment. The Amite, for instance, has "scarcely a perceptible current; the water dark, turgid and stagnate, being from shore to shore covered with a scum or pellicle of a green and purplish cast . . . in short, these dark loathsome waters . . . seem to be a strong extract or tincture of the leaves of the trees, herbs and reeds, arising from the shores, and which almost overspread them . . ." (pp. 425-426). It is his interest in such a river as the turgid and stagnant Amite that makes his description of a "pellucid river"—the Little St. Juan—all the more impressive in beauty. "The waters," he writes, "are the clearest and purest . . . transmitting distinctly the natural form and appear-



ance of the objects moving in the transparent floods, or reposing on the silvery bed, with the finny inhabitants sporting in its gently flowing stream" (p. 224).

Bartram's attention to lesser bodies of water is equally concentrated and often detailed. Lake George is "a large and beautiful piece of water; it is a dilatation of the river St. Juan . . ." (p. 102). Lake Wakamaw "is the source of a fine river of that name . . . twenty six miles in circuit . . . bounded on the North-West coast by vast rich swamps, fit for the production of Rice . . ." (p. 473). Battle Lagoon he remembers for the multitude of crocodiles that infest it; Carver's Creek adds a touch of intimacy to his description of the "ancient seat of Colonel William Bartram," his uncle, in North Carolina; Falling Creek is memorable for its "unparalleled cascade . . . rolling and leaping off the rocks" (p. 341). The cataracts at Augusta are four or five feet in height, when the Savannah River is low. Midway between Augusta and Savannah is a Great Spring, an "amazing fountain of transparent cool water. . . . There are multitudes of fish in the fountain . . . continually ascending and descending through the rocky apertures" (p. 461). The Great Sink in the Indian country is a large basin surrounded by a "group of rocky hills." The waters "descend by slow degrees, through rocky caverns, into the bowels of the earth, whence they are carried by secret subterraneous channels into other receptacles and basons" (p. 203).<sup>12</sup> Other "sinks and wells" are described; the surrounding strata of rock, Bartram finds, "admit water to weep through, trickling down, drop after drop, or chasing each other in winding little rills down to the bottom" (pp. 246-247). Then there is "the vast fountain of . . . hot mineral water" which "boils up with great force, forming immediately a vast circular bason, capacious enough for several shallops to ride in" (p. 145). And, finally, there is the "enchanted and amazing crystal fountain, which incessantly threw up, from dark, rocky caverns below, tons of water every minute" (p. 165).<sup>12</sup>

To complete the summary of bodies of water as an element

<sup>12</sup> In connection with this quotation see Part III on Coleridge's indebtedness to Bartram.



in Bartram's landscape, mention must also be made of his innumerable references to "rills," "brooks," "ponds," "pools," and "streams."

And here also it must be noted that Bartram's bodies of water are not isolated objects. They blend into the general landscape; they reflect the hills and forests on their banks; they are dotted with islands; they swarm with animal life; they are covered with vegetation. His description of the "very singular aquatic plant," the *pistia stratiotes*, which "associates in large communities, or floating islands, some of them a quarter of a mile in extent" (p. 88), is one of the most memorable passages in the *Travels*. In a later chapter, he again notes "floating islands and green fields of the Pistia near the shores of the river and lagoons" (p. 132). Another fine passage is his description of the *Nymphaea Nelumbo*, the "many acres" of it, "which at a distant view presents a very singular and diverting scene; a delusive green wavy plain . . ." (p. 408).

Bartram's plains and mountains and streams, important as they are in themselves as sources of aesthetic delight, are even more important as habitations of both plants and animals. Bartram's first interest was the "vegetable kingdom"; his second was the "animal kingdom." We have seen that his plants are described in their native habitat, be that a marsh, mountain, meadow, or pond. The same observation applies to his description of animals. Wherever he went he noted every bird, beast, and insect that came within his view. Species hitherto unknown to him, naturally, interested him most, but he also welcomed any opportunity to enlarge his knowledge of the species he already knew.

His description of the common wild animals is mostly expository. He tells us that the bears of the region he explored "are a strong creature, and prey on the fruits of the country, and will likewise devour young calves, swine and sheep." But, he adds, he could never "learn a well attested instance of their attacking mankind" (p. 282). He tells us that "the wolves of Florida are larger than a dog, and are perfectly black, except the females, which have a white spot on the breast, but they are not so large as the wolves of Canada and Pennsylvania, which are

of a yellowish brown colour " (p. 199). In a later chapter he says that he has been " credibly informed that the wolves here are frequently seen pied, black and white, and of other mixed colours. They assemble in companies in the night time, howl and bark altogether, especially in cold winter nights, which is terrifying to the wandering bewildered traveler " (p. 282). But his picture of wolves is not confined entirely to hearsay. In a few places he narrates actual personal adventures with wolves (pp. 158-159; 199). His resort to hearsay is only a part of his scientific caution. He completes the information he has gathered by personal observation with an account of what he has heard, but he is careful to distinguish between the two sources. In the following description of foxes both personal observation and hearsay merge, yet it is easy to note which is which:

The foxes of Carolina and Florida are of the smaller red species; they bark in the night round about plantations, but do not bark twice in the same place; they move precipitately and in a few minutes are heard on the opposite side of the plantation, or at a great distance: it is said that dogs are terrified at the noise, and cannot be persuaded or compelled to pursue them, they commit depredation on young pigs, lambs, poultry, & c. (pp. 282-283).

The wild-cat or lynx, he tells us, is

a fierce and bold little animal, preying on young pigs, fawns, turkies, & c. they are not half the size of a common cur dog, are generally of a greyish colour, and somewhat tabbied; their sides bordering on the belly is varied with yellowish brown spots, and almost black waved streaks, and brindled (p. 282).

Bartram also mentions " tygers " as being numerous in the region he explored, which provoked Zimmermann's annotation and note: " Tiger giebt es eigentlich nirgends in America. Der Verfasser meint wohl den Jaguar oder Cugar, *Felis onca* und *F. concolor* Linn." <sup>13</sup> Zimmermann evidently ignored Bartram's own annotation, given in a footnote. " This creature," Bartram explains his use of the word *tyger*, " is called, in Pennsylvania and the northern States, Panther; but in Carolina and the southern States, is called Tyger; they are very strong, much larger

<sup>13</sup> German translation of the *Travels*, p. 9.

than any dog, of a yellowish brown, or clay colour, having a very long tail; they are a mischievous animal, and prey on calves, young colts, & c."<sup>14</sup> Bartram apparently records a regional usage, the authenticity of which is borne out a century later by Eggleston in his statement that "The panther was long called a 'tyger' in the Carolinas, and a 'lyon' elsewhere."<sup>15</sup> Numerous other animals appear in Bartram's narrative: herds of deer and elk, many species of squirrel, racoons, opossums, rabbits, moles, gophers—"the great land tortoise" whose "castles and diurnal retreats" are "vast caves . . . from whence they issue forth in the night, in search of prey" (*Travels*, p. 18)—rats, mice, weasels, polecats, and bats.

Insects constitute an important part of Bartram's landscape. Flies in "incredible numbers" torment the horses of his party, "to such a degree, as to excite compassion even in the hearts of pack-horsemen" (p. 384). They are "a flying host of persecuting spirits" (p. 385). He is surprised at his failure to notice any bees in West Florida, for "they are so numerous all along the Eastern continent from Nova-Scotia to East Florida, even in the wild forests, as to be thought, by the generality of the inhabitants, aborigines of this continent" (p. 413). He describes with delight the "incredible numbers" of butterflies, and revels in the rich colors of the different species (pp. xxvii-xxix). He observes swarms of grasshoppers, "the favourite delicious food" of rice birds (p. 297), and describes cochineal insects feeding on cacti. "The female . . . is very large and fleshy, covered with a fine white silk or cottony web, which feels always moist or dewy, and seems designed by nature to protect them from the violent heat of the sun. The male is very small in comparison to the female, and but very few in number . . ." (p. 163). However, the most impressive of Bartram's descriptions of insects is that of "the small flying insects, of the genus termed by naturalists Ephemera." Three pages are devoted to them, describing their birth, their ephemeral lives, and their death, and ending in a series of philosophical reflec-

<sup>14</sup> *Travels*, p. 46.

<sup>15</sup> Edward Eggleston, *Century*, XLVII, 849. This statement is also cited in the *N.E.D.* under the word "tiger."

tions generated by Bartram's contemplation of them. He assures us that

The importance of the existence of these beautiful and delicately formed little creatures, . . . whose frame and organization is equally wonderful, more delicate, and perhaps as complicated as that of the most perfect human being, is well worth a few moments contemplation; I mean particularly when they appear in the fly state. And if we consider the very short period, of that stage of existence which we may reasonably suppose, to be the only space of their life that admits of pleasure and enjoyment, what a lesson doth it not afford us of the vanity of our own pursuits (pp. 80-83).

The ephemera is born in water, but is only one speck of the multiplicity of life-forms in Bartram's streams. Besides such curiosities as "the manate or sea cow" (p. 231), his waters are the habitation of many species of tortoise—"very large when full grown, from twenty to thirty and forty pounds weight, extremely fat and delicious, but if eaten to excess, are apt to purge people not accustomed to eat their meat" (p. 179); ". . . small, comparatively, and the back shell lightly raised . . ." (p. 281);—of otter—"common . . . in West Florida, towards the mountains" (p. 281);—of water-snakes; and, of course, of all kinds of fish. To this incomplete list of amphibious animals must be added: frogs—in one place four pages enumerating and describing various species (pp. 276-280);—beavers—"abound most in the north of Georgia, and in West-Florida, near the mountains" (p. 281);—minks; and alligators.

Bartram's alligators deserve special attention, if only because of the powerful impression they have produced upon both scientific and literary commentators. Soon after the appearance of the *Travels* in London, a reviewer, while admitting that Bartram was "throughout an amusing and intelligent observer," took exception to his "somewhat too luxuriant and poetical language . . . in his extraordinary account of the crocodile, or alligator, as he indiscriminately terms that horrid animal."<sup>16</sup> The *Anthologia Hibernica* copied a page and a half from Bartram, heading the item "Crocodiles and their Nests. From

<sup>16</sup> *The Monthly Review; or Literary Journal*. Enlarged from January to April inclusive, 1793. London.



*Bartram's Travels*, lately published,"<sup>17</sup> and *The Wonderful Magazine* carried a "Surprising Account of American Crocodiles,"<sup>18</sup> also copied from Bartram.<sup>19</sup> The implied exception taken by *The Monthly Review* to Bartram's indiscriminate use of the terms "crocodile" and "alligator" indicates a careless reading of Bartram, who, in a footnote stated: "I have made use of the terms crocodile and alligator indiscriminately for this animal, alligator being the country name" (*Travels*, 90). This footnote recalls Lawson's statement: "The allegator is the same as the Crocodile, and differs only in name."<sup>20</sup>

Bartram devotes ten pages to the alligator. He introduces "that horrid animal" at a dramatic moment,

Behold him rushing forth from the flags and reeds. His enormous body swells. His plaited tail brandished high, floats upon the lake. The waters like a cataract descend from his opening jaws. Clouds of smoke issue from his dilated nostrils. The earth trembles with his thunder. When immediately from the opposite coast of the lagoon, emerges from the deep his rival champion. They suddenly dart upon each other. The boiling surface of the lake marks their rapid course, and a terrific conflict commences (p. 118).

There follow first a vivid description of the conflict, then of Bartram's own battle with the alligators, of their "incredible loud and terrific" roar, which kept him awake at night, and finally of their nests. Scientists as well as literary reviewers have criticized Bartram's "luxuriant and poetical language." Clarke considered his account "written with such spirit and enthusiasm as to carry the author beyond the limits of simple and accurate statement."<sup>21</sup> True called it "most evident hyperbole,"<sup>22</sup> and

<sup>17</sup> *Anthologia Hibernica*, I, 259-260.

<sup>18</sup> *The Wonderful Magazine*, IV (1793-1794), 358.

<sup>19</sup> For the last two pieces of information I am indebted to Prof. Lowes. See *Road to Xanadu*, p. 452.

<sup>20</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 74.

<sup>21</sup> F. S. Clarke, "The Habits and Embryology of the American Alligator," *Journal of Morphology*, V (1891), 181-214.

<sup>22</sup> F. W. True, "The Fisheries and Fishery Industries of the United States," *The Useful Aquatic Reptiles and Batrachians of the United States*, Part 2, pp. 137-162. Washington, 1884.

Kellogg thought he detected "obvious embellishments."<sup>23</sup> And it has remained for a scientist to prove that Bartram's account of the alligators, poetical as it may be, is neither fantastic nor hyperbolic. Dr. Francis Harper, in a recent article based on his own explorations in the region which Bartram had visited, comes to the conclusion that "The fidelity and accuracy of Bartram's account as a whole . . . are most impressive." Bartram's description of the roaring of the alligators is, in his opinion, "The only genuine, first-hand account by a naturalist," and Bartram's book generally is a "classic" which cannot be "overlooked by any zoologist."<sup>24</sup>

While on the subject of "reptilians," one cannot overlook Bartram's lizards and snakes. His lizards, though they do not startle one as his alligators do, dart across his path and he stops to observe and describe them. He tells us that the largest specimen of the "little green chameleon" that he has ever seen "is seven inches in length," that he has seen striped lizards, "called scorpion," "blue bellied squamous lizards," "a large copper coloured lizard, and a very slender one of a fine blue colour" (*Travels*, p. 280).

Snakes appear frequently in Bartram's narrative. They invade his camps; he stumbles upon them on the road; he goes out of his way to study them. He observes their color, studies their habits, philosophizes about them, and pleads for them against man's enmity. Once he was even served rattle-snake flesh for dinner; he tasted it, he admits, but he could not swallow it (p. 271). Curious species of snakes attract his attention. The glass snake is in "colour and texture . . . like bluish green glass, which, together with its fragility, almost persuades a stranger that they are (sic) in reality of that brittle substance" (p. 196). The green snake is "a beautiful innocent creature," and so is the ribband snake (p. 275). The moccasin snake is a "large and horrid serpent" (p. 272). The pine or bull snake is "pied black and white" and utters "a terrible loud hissing noise, sounding very hollow and like distant thunder" (p. 276). The

<sup>23</sup> Remington Kellogg, *The Habits and Economic Importance of Alligators*. Tech. Bull. No. 47, U. S. Dept. Agri., Dec., 1929, p. 10.

<sup>24</sup> "Alligators of the Okefinokee," *Scientific Monthly*, XXXI (1930), 51-67.

vividness with which Bartram saw his snakes and the concentrated clearness with which he described them is illustrated in such a passage as the following:

The coach-whip snake is a beautiful creature; when full grown they are six and seven feet in length, and the largest part of their body not so thick as a cane or common stick; its head not larger than the end of a man's finger; their neck is very slender, and from the abdomen tapers away in the manner of a small switch or coach-whip; the top of the head and neck, for three or four inches, is as black and shining as a raven; the throat and belly as white as snow; and the upper side of their body of a chocolate colour, excepting the tail part, almost from the abdomen to the extremity, which is black . . . (p. 219).

But it is necessary to look into Bartram's waters again. The principal inhabitants of these waters—the fishes—have not yet been noted. Bartram paid a great deal of attention to fish; in the first place, because to a traveler, fish is a means of subsistence; in the second place, because the fishes are a part of the "animal kingdom" he had chosen as his province of study. Early in his travels, as he sails by the islands on the coast of Georgia, he observes that

The coasts, sounds, and inlets . . . abound with a variety of excellent fish, particularly Rock, Bass, Drum, Mullet, Sheepshead, Whiting, Grooper, Flounder, Sea-Trout (this last seems to be a species of Cod), Skate, Skipjack, Stingray, the Shark, and great Black Stingray, are insatiable cannibals. The bays and lagoons are stored with oysters and varieties of other shell-fish, crabs, shrimp, &c. The clams, in particular are large, their meat white, tender and delicate (pp. 67-68).

In the St. Johns River the fish is so numerous that he is anxious to avoid raising suspicion of his veracity. "Should I say," he asks,

that the river (in this place) from shore to shore, and perhaps near half a mile above and below me, appeared to be one solid bank of fish, of various kinds, pushing through this narrow pass of St. Juans into the lake, on their return down the river . . . (p. 123)?

He derives aesthetic delight from watching the "innumerable bands of fish" in the crystal basin near Lake George. Some are clothed in the most brilliant colours; the voracious crocodile stretched along at full length, as the great trunk of a tree in size, the devouring

garfish, inimical trout, and all the varieties of gilded painted bream, the barbed catfish, dreaded sting-ray, skate and flounder, spotted bass, sheeps head and ominous drum; all in their separate bands and communities, with free and unsuspicious intercourse performing their evolutions . . . (pp. 166-167).

He notes with especial care individual species of fish. "The goldfish is about the size of the anchovy . . . of a neat slender form; the head is covered with a salade of an ultramarine blue, the back of a redish brown, the sides and belly of a flame, or of the colour of a fine red lead . . ." (p. 44). The "red-belly . . . is as large as a man's hand, nearly oval and thin, being compressed on each side; the tail is beautifully formed; the top of the head and back of an olive-green, besprinkled with russet specks; the sides of a sea green, inclining to azure, insensibly blended with the olive above, and beneath lightens to a silvery white, or pearl colour, elegantly powdered with specks of the finest green, russet, and gold" (p. 12). An even more colorful description is that of Bartram's favorite fish, the yellow bream, or sunfish. "What a most beautiful creature," he exclaims,

is this fish . . . gliding to and fro, and figuring in the still clear waters, with his orient attendants and associates . . . the whole fish is of a pale gold or burnished brass colour, darker on the back and upper sides; the scales are . . . variably powdered with red, russet, silver, blue and green specks, so laid on the scales as to appear like real dust or opaque bodies, each apparent particle being so projected by light and shade, and the various attitudes of the fish, as to deceive the sight . . . the fins are of an Orange colour; and . . . the ultimate angle of the branchiostega terminate (sic) by a little spatula, the extreme end of which represents a crescent of the finest ultramarine blue, encircled with silver, and velvet black, like the eye in the feathers of a peacock's train (pp. 153-154).

The landscape of Bartram is composed not only of land and water, and the plants and animals that these contain, but also of the air and its animals. As has already been indicated elsewhere in this study, Bartram was an ornithologist of importance and his list of American birds, in Part II, Chapter X, of the *Travels*, is generally recognized as the "most complete and correct" before the publication of the *American Ornithology* by his pupil and friend, Alexander Wilson. In fact, he is con-



sidered "the first [American] ornithologist of any reputation,"<sup>25</sup> and his list, to be exact, contains 215 different species of birds.<sup>26</sup> Bartram was, of course, familiar with the work of previous observers of American birds, especially Catesby and Lawson. Jefferson's list of birds<sup>27</sup> he could not have known, for although the *Travels* was published some years after Jefferson's book, it was written some years before.

It is not, however, with Bartram's lists of birds that we are concerned but with his description of birds as an element of his landscape. Here we are more interested in his "curious bird, called by an Indian name (Ephouskyca) which signifies in our language the crying bird . . . about the size of a large domestic hen; all the body . . . is of a dark led colour, every feather edged or tipped with white, which makes the bird appear speckled on a near view" (*Travels*, 147). We are interested in his detailed description of the wood pelican "a large bird, perhaps near three feet high when standing erect" (p. 149). That "admirable bird," the turkey buzzard, appears in his landscape, the painted vulture with its "white or cream" coloured plumage and its red crown (pp. 150-151). With Bartram we listen to "the cheering converse of the wild turkey-cock" (p. 83), and "Behold the loud, sonorous, watchful savanna cranes" as they sail "with musical clangor in detached squadrons" (p. 146). We watch the "curious and handsome Snake Bird, a species of cormorant," whose "head and neck . . . are extremely small and slender . . . all the upper side, the abdomen and thighs, are as black and glossy as a raven's . . . the breast and upper part of the belly are covered with feathers of a cream colour, the tail is very long, of a deep black, and tipped with a silvery white, and when spread, represents an unfurled fan" (pp. 132-133). We note the fishing-hawk, a

<sup>25</sup> *The New International Encyclopedia*, article on Ornithology, XVII, 588.

<sup>26</sup> See Biographical Sketch in American Philosophical Society Pamphlet v 1166. In connection with Bartram's list of birds in the *Travels*, see also his MS Diary for a record of bird migration, and the reprint of portions of this Diary, edited by Witmer Stone, under the title "Bird Migration Records of William Bartram," *The Auk*, XXX, 325-58.

<sup>27</sup> *Notes on the State of Virginia*, 1784. The edition consulted is the third American, 1808; the list of birds appears on pp. 102-107.

" princely bird," which " subsists entirely on fish which he takes himself, scorning to live and grow fat on the dear earned labours of another," and which in turn " contributes liberally to the support of the bald eagle " (p. 8). We observe jays " of an azure blue colour," towhee birds, " bluish grey butcher " birds (p. 172), " black pied " and " yellowish clay coloured " rice birds (p. 296), cedar birds feeding " on various sorts of succulent fruit and berries " (p. 298). We distinguish the song of the blue " linet " from that of the nonpareil, which is " remarkably low, soft, and warbling, exceedingly tender and soothing " (p. 299), and we hear the cat-bird, whom Catesby, according to Bartram, has maligned by attributing to it but one note; for, says Bartram, this bird is " in reality . . . one of our most eminent songsters, little inferior to the philomela or mock-bird; and in some remarkable instances, perhaps, exceeds them both, in particular as a buffoon or mimick " (p. 299). Finally, we watch a wild pigeon hunt in a swamp in which multitudes of the birds, blinded by the blaze of pine torches, " drop off the limbs to the ground " (pp. 470-471). One comes away from a reading of Bartram's description of birds with a feeling of the justness of a remark—far from inclusive—made by a recent student of Bartram. " William Bartram," says Henry Chester Tracy, " passed on to us an impression of Catesby's ground-doves, in the South. He found them ' perfectly enchanting,' and so do we—listening through pages, faded by a hundred and fifty years." <sup>28</sup>

Bartram's landscape is not a static picture. There is movement and change. His narrative moves with his continued travels. Sometimes unusual things happen, an eclipse of the moon, for instance (*Travels*, p. 51), or the eruption of a geyser, " an inexpressible rushing noise, like a mighty hurricane or thunder storm " and " floods rushing upwards many feet high " (p. 239); more often usual things happen which become unusual through the vivid and dramatic description of Bartram: storms, for instance. A few typical examples will illustrate:

<sup>28</sup> *American Naturalists*. New York, 1930, p. 25. The passage in Bartram to which Tracy refers is: " Catesby's ground doves are also here in abundance: they are remarkably beautiful, about the size of a sparrow, and their soft and plaintive cooing perfectly enchanting " (*Travels*, p. 8).

. . . instantly the lightning, as it were, opening a fiery chasm in the black cloud, darted with inconceivable rapidity on the trunk of a large pine tree, that stood thirty or forty yards from me, and set it in a blaze. The flame instantly ascended upwards of ten or twelve feet, and continued flaming about fifteen minutes, when it was gradually extinguished, by the deluges of rain that fell upon it (pp. 13-14). The mighty cloud now expands its sable wings, . . . and is driven irresistibly on by the tumultuous winds, spreading his livid wings around the gloomy concave, armed with terrors of thunder and fiery shafts of lightning. Now the lofty forests bend low beneath its fury, their limbs and wavy boughs are tossed about and catch hold of each other; the mountains tremble and seem to reel about, and the ancient hills to be shaken to their foundations: the furious storm sweeps along, smoking through the vale and over the resounding hills; the face of the earth is obscured by the deluge descending from the firmament, and I am deafened by the din of the thunder (p. 343).

These, then, are the elements of Bartram's landscape. Because they were new to him and because they contain an element of the picturesque, he emphasized the plants and animals peculiar to the South, but he did not exclude the plants and animals that are common to the other regions of the United States. His landscape is dotted with ornate and "exotic" plants, but he does not overlook "the useful vegetables." He often refers to "indigo, corn, potatoes," and to "other sorts of esculent plants" (p. 6). He observes fields of tobacco and gardens of cucumbers, lettuce, and berries. He notes a new species of gourd (p. 479) and a root of China briar from which the Indians make "a very agreeable, cooling sort of jelly" (p. 241). Nor does he overlook the common domestic animals. He sees herds of cattle and he stops to watch "a number of slaves, women, boys and girls . . . milking the cows" (p. 310). Indian horses attract him, and the Seminole horses, he thinks, "are the most beautiful and sprightly species of that noble creature, perhaps any where to be seen" (p. 215). He admires a black Florida dog trained to take care of his master's horses (p. 215).

Nor is Bartram's landscape entirely without human life. There are of course days when nothing is to be seen but earth and sky, fields and swamps and woods and streams and mountains, trees and flowers, birds and bees, and Bartram himself in the center of it all, toiling up a river in his canoe or

mounted on his nag climbing up a wooded hill. But everywhere, in time, he comes upon towns—and men, white and Indian. Charleston is in his landscape, and Savannah, Augusta, Sunbury, Fort Barrington, Wrightsborough, Buffalo Lick, Broughton Island, Frederica, Mount Royal, Cuscowilla, Talahasochte, St. Augustine, Mobile, Manchac, New Richmond, Point Coupé, and a hundred other big and little hamlets and trading posts with strange names, most of them long extinct and forgotten. And Bartram stopped to observe the most interesting of all animals, man, and his activities, just as he stopped to observe the other activities of nature and the remains of man's past activities—Indian ruins, mounds, burying grounds, tumuli.



## CHAPTER II

### THE ART OF BARTRAM

Throughout this study Bartram's "style" has received incidental mention. This has been inevitable because of the amount of attention it has attracted from both literary and scientific commentators. English reviewers noted his "luxuriant and poetical" language; Carlyle enjoyed his "wondrous kind of floundering eloquence"; Zimmermann, in translating the *Travels*, corrected his "poetischen Floskeln";<sup>1</sup> Squier insisted on retaining "the antiquated and somewhat quaint phraseology and style of the author"<sup>2</sup> of the *Observations*; Miss Dondore was impressed by his "luxuriant detail";<sup>3</sup> a modern American reviewer has been pleased by his "lush descriptions";<sup>4</sup> and Tracy has found his language "rhetorical," not, however, without at the same time being aware of the prime virtue of Bartram's art, his "genuine sensitiveness" to all the aspects of nature.<sup>5</sup>

It is this sensitiveness that nourishes Bartram's art and stamps his reactions to nature with originality. His style may derive partly from the conventional nature notations of his time, but his senses are acute and his sensations genuine. His love of nature transcends the occasionally stilted diction in which it is expressed and infuses his writings with an infectious enthusiasm. Imperceptibly, what begins by sounding as bombast, soon establishes itself as native exuberance. Alexander Wilson acknowledged that he had caught this enthusiasm from Bartram, when he wrote:

<sup>1</sup> *Reisen*, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, Prefatory Note, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Dorothy Anne Dondore, *The Prairie and the Making of Middle America: Four Centuries of Description*. Cedar Rapids, Iowa, p. 133.

<sup>4</sup> "Notes of a Rapid Reader," *The Saturday Review of Literature*, April 21, 1928.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 38.

I confess that I was always an enthusiast in my admiration of the rural scenery of nature; but since your example and encouragement have set me to attempt to imitate her productions, I see new beauties in every bird, plant, or flower I contemplate.<sup>6</sup>

And we today must acknowledge that it is Bartram's enthusiasm, exuberance, or gusto which vitalizes his landscape and compels us to sense it as an immediate experience. The record of his sense impressions is not only genuine, accurate, and varied, but it is shot through with poetic coloring, which, while it never distorts, adds a touch of the glamorous to his descriptions.

One form of the glamorous, imparted by his enthusiasm, is a frequent lapse into sheer rhapsody. As a consequence, his visual impressions, which are for the most part carefully and temperately expressed, occasionally become fervent and exclamatory. A sunrise inspires him to such a passage as the following:

Behold how gracious and beneficent smiles the roseate morn! now the sun arises and fills the plains with light, his glories appear on the forests, encompassing the meadows, and gild the top of the terebinthine Pine and exalted Palms, now gently rustling by the pressure of the waking breezes: the music of the seraphic crane resounds in the skies, in separate squadrons they sail, encircling their precincts, slowly descend beating the dense air, and alight on the green dewy verge of the expansive lake; its surface yet smoaking with the grey ascending mists, which, condensed aloft in clouds of vapour, are born away by the morning breezes and at last gradually vanish on the distant horizon (pp. 245-46).

A forest scene makes him exclaim:

Behold yon promontory, projecting far into the great river, beyond the still lagoon, half a mile distance from me, what a magnificent grove arises, on its banks! how glorious the Palm! how majestically stands the Laurel, its head forming a perfect cone! its dark green foliage, seems silvered over with milkwhite flowers. They are so large, as to be distinctly visible at the distance of a mile or more (p. 85).

The rhapsodist is, of course, never entirely separated from the scientist, and frequently his style is a combination of botany and poetry:

What sylvan scene is here! the pompous Magnolia, reigns sovereign

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

of the forests; how sweet the aromatic *Illisium* groves? how gaily flutters the radiated wings of the *Magnolia auriculata*? each branch supporting an expanded umbrella superbly crested with a silver plume, fragrant blossom, or crimson studded strobile and fruits! I recline on the verdant bank, and view the beauties of the groves, *Aesculus pavia*, *Prunus memorialis*, *floribus racemosis*, . . . (pp. 407-8).

Nor are his reactions to sound, on occasion, less ecstatic. This is his notation of evening sounds:

How harmonious and soothing is this native sylvan music now at still evening! inexpressibly tender are the responsive cooings of the innocent dove, in the fragrant *Zanthoxilon* groves, and the variable and tuneful warblings of the nonpareil; with the more sprightly and elevated strains of the blue linnet and golden icterus; this is indeed harmony even amidst the incessant croaking of the frogs; the shades of silent night are made more chearful, with the shrill voice of the whip-poor-will and active mock-bird. . . . (p. 154).

And this of running water:

How harmonious and sweetly murmur the purling rills and fleeting brooks, roving along the shadowy vales, passing through the dark, subterranean caverns, or dashing over steep rocky precipices, . . . (p. 322).

But Bartram's descriptions of sound need special emphasis. They are set down with such skill that their impression upon the Romantic poets of his time is not surprising. They are varied enough to include the gentle cooing of doves and the violent roaring of tempests. He hears the lapping of the surf; "the heavy tread of some animal" at night, "the dry limbs of trees upon the ground" cracking "under his feet" (p. 158); the "social prattling coot" and "the squeeling water-hen" (p. 159); the "languishing softness and melancholy air in the Indian convivial songs" (p. 245); "the whooping of owls, screaming of bitterns . . . the wood-rats running amongst the leaves" (p. 124); the "various languages, cries, and fluttering" of birds. He hears the different noises of frogs: that of "the largest frog known in Florida," which resembles "the grunting of a swine"; that of the bell frog, which "seems clamorous and disgusting"; that of the green frog, which "exactly resembles the barking of little dogs, or the yelping of

puppies," that of "a less green frog," whose notes are remarkably like that of young chickens"; and that of the shad frog, from whose noise "at some distance one would be almost persuaded that there were assemblies of men in serious debate" (pp. 276-78). And, of course, there is the noise of the alligators. He hears them "plunging and roaring" (p. 88); he hears "the horrid noise of their closing jaws" (p. 123), a "surprising" noise, "like that which is made by forcing a heavy plank with violence upon the ground" (p. 129). It is not at all surprising to find that Coleridge copied into his Note Book the climax of Bartram's description of "the incredible loud and terrifying roar," which

resembles very heavy distant thunder, not only shaking the air and waters, but causing the earth to tremble; and when hundreds and thousands are roaring at the same time, you can scarcely be persuaded, but that the whole globe is violently and dangerously agitated (p. 129).

Bartram, as will soon be shown, saw nature principally as a painter, and his writings are consequently rich in visual descriptions. Yet his sensitiveness to sound—which has just been indicated—was only slightly less remarkable, and any extensive study of his art cannot ignore his notation of gustatory, tactile, and olfactory sensations. He notes the "aromatic flavour" and bitter taste of the palmetto royal tree (p. 72); the "sweet and agreeable" taste of the live oak acorn, from which "the Indians obtain . . . a sweet oil, which they use in the cooking of hommony, rice, &c. . . ." (p. 85); the "most disagreeable taste . . . brassy and vitriolic" of a hot spring (p. 145); the "gratifying" taste of oranges (p. 200); the "sweet and pleasant eating . . . like chestnuts" of the *Nymphaea Nelumbo* (p. 409). To be sure, some of these taste descriptions are the observations of a scientist, exact statements of the properties of plants such as one finds in a botanical dictionary. Yet such adjectives as "agreeable," "gratifying," and "pleasant" are purely subjective and add an emotional coloring to Bartram's scientific notations. Tactile sensations are suggested by the "silky hair" of a spider (p. xxix); the "fine . . . downy pubescence" of a *rhododendron* (p. 336); the "hard . . . couch" on which he reclined at night (p. 50); the "tepid" water of a spring (p.



145); the "sandy beach, hard and firm by the beating surf" (p. 157); "humid rocks" and "smooth pebbles"; the sting of burning flies, "no less ocute than a prick from a red-hot needle, or a spark of fire on the skin" (p. 385). He records the smell of "sweet scented flowers" (p. xxviii); of vegetation "breathing fragrance every where" (p. 34); the breeze "perfumed by the fragrant breath of the superb . . . White Lily" (p. 59); the "offensive smell" of a geyser (p. 145); "odoriferous Illisium [Illicium?] groves" (p. 160); the "fragrant red strawberry" (p. 344). Sometimes he notes several sensations at the same time: thus the orange groves are "loaded with both green and ripe fruit and embellished with their fragrant bloom, gratifying the taste, the sight, and the smell at the same instant" (p. 200), and "the pericarpium and berries [of the laurel magnolia] possess an agreeable spicy scent, and an aromatic bitter taste. The wood when seasoned is of straw colour, compact, and harder and firmer, than that of the Poplar . . ." (p. 86).

To Bartram's notations of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch reactions, must be added his perception of mass and motion. For Bartram's descriptions are seldom static. He is constantly on the move, hence the woods and fields and promontories are perceived as passing by. He speaks of the "alternate appearance and recess of the coast, whilst the far distant blue hills slowly retreat and disappear; or, as we approach the coast, the capes and promontories first strike our sight, emerging from the watery expanse, and like mighty giants, elevating their crests towards the skies . . ." (p. 3). He speaks of "squadrons" of birds and "nations" of birds and "tribes" of birds, of "flocks" of turkeys and "communities" of cranes, of "squadrons" and "troops" and "parties" of horses, of "droves" of cattle, of "herds" of deer, of "bands" and "armies" of fish, of "companies" of traders and "companies of young innocent Cherokee virgins," of "masses" and "groups" of rocks, of "extensive" forests and "extensive" savannas. And these masses are usually dynamic, in motion: the birds are in flight, the horses frolick in the fields or are being driven to market, the cattle graze, the deer take fright and scamper away into the woods, the fish swim, the traders go to town, the Cherokee vir-

gins pick strawberries, and even the rocks and the forests approach or recede as Bartram travels from or toward them. His rivulets "glide in serpentine mazes," his creeks are "brisk-flowing" and his rivers run "with foaming rapidity." There is perpetual change and flux in his landscape. The flowers are in the very act of "painting the coves with a rich and cheerful scenery, continually unfolding new prospects as I traverse the shores; the towering mountains seem continually in motion as I pass along, pompously rising their superb crests towards the lofty skies, traversing the far distant horizon" (p. 346).

The rhapsodic element which Bartram's record of his sense impressions often contains is mingled with an emotion deeper than mere aesthetic enthusiasm, a sensation of awe and sublimity. The vastness of the landscape evokes a feeling of grandeur, of magnitude, of majesty, so that the air of exuberance which pervades his descriptions is not merely a physical quality but is a more subtle and spiritual emotion. He discerns "few objects out at sea . . . but what are sublime, awful, and majestic . . ." (p. 2). Standing on the shore he notes "how awfully great and sublime is the majestic scene . . . !" (p. 61). A forest of pine trees continuing for five or six miles is "sublime." A tempest exhibits "a very awful scene." In high, projecting promontories he sees "grandeur and sublimity." He approaches a vale and observes that it is situated "amidst sublimely high forests" and "awful shades!" (p. 343). He is struck "with a kind of awe, at beholding the stateliness of the trunk" of the *Cupressus disticha* tree (p. 96).

Bartram was no theorist in aesthetics, yet in regarding sublimity as a vital element in landscape he shows his kinship with the aestheticians of his time. "The Sublime," Hussey tells us, had been noted by Shaftesbury as "the highest order of scenery," but it was Edmund Burke who was "the first to recognize it as a category co-ordinate with the Beautiful."<sup>7</sup> Hussey could, of course, have gone back all the way to Longinus but it is true nevertheless that the eighteenth century saw the development of the idea of the Sublime as an element of beauty to a degree which previous centuries had not dreamed of. "Vastness,"

<sup>7</sup> Christopher Hussey, *The Picturesque*. London, 1927, p. 55.

Hussey continues, "became one of the sublime qualities" in Burke's categories.<sup>8</sup> And vastness, it will be noted, is one of the qualities that strikes Bartram as "sublime," "awful," or "majestic." Thus he finds that an "ancient sublime forest . . . intersected with extensive avenues, vistas and green lawns, opening to extensive savannas and far distant Rice plantations, captivates" his "senses by scenes of magnificence and grandeur" (*Travels*, p. 309). In fact, he is capable of losing himself in vastness, to the neglect of his business as a scientific observer, which requires minute and close attention to specific objects. Once, he confesses, standing on the top of a mountain whence he enjoyed "a view inexpressibly magnificent and comprehensive," he became "wholly engaged in the contemplation of this magnificent landscape, infinitely varied, and without bound," until he realized that he was "insensible or regardless of the charming objects more within . . . reach: a new species of . . ." (pp. 335-6).

It has already been stated that aesthetically William Bartram saw nature with the eyes of a painter. It is important to note to what extent this is true and how this quality influenced his descriptions. He had an accurate eye for line and color; he copied nature: turtles, vines, flowers, birds. It was therefore logical enough that when he came to describe nature, using words instead of paints as his medium, the methods and habits of the painter should still persist. Always he sees his landscape with the painter's eye, and always he translates his visual impressions in terms of color, of lights and shades, using the concentrated impressionism and the economy of means of an artist painting a canvas. Moreover, it is quite clear that he knew paintings, had observed them not only with pleasure, but with a retentive memory. Speaking of the Snake Birds which he saw in the waters of Florida, he remarks, "I think I have seen paintings of them on the Chinese screens and other India pictures" (p. 132). Or, again, watching fish and crocodiles in a fountain, he comments: "This amazing and delightful scene, though real, appears at first but as a piece of excellent painting; there seems no medium." Besides the language of the painter in this

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

description, there is apparent his knowledge of perspective in the finishing touches of this scene: "You imagine the picture to be within a few inches of your eyes, and that you may without the least difficulty touch any one of the fish, or put your fingers upon the crocodile's eye, when it really is twenty or thirty feet under water" (p. 167).

Even more definite is his knowledge of painting and his use of painter's terms as disclosed by his writings on the Indians. An answer to one of the *Queries about Indians* contains the following remarks:

Like Egyptian mystical hieroglyphics—extremely caricature & picturesque. No *chiaro scuro*, yet bold outlines, natural. Most beautiful painting on bodies.<sup>9</sup>

A fuller answer to this or a similar query appears in the *Observations*, in which, among other things, he says:

I am sensible that these specimens of their paintings will, to us, who have made such incomparable progress and refinement in the arts and sciences, appear trifling and ludicrous. . . . Most beautiful painting now to be found among the Muscogulges is on the bodies of their ancient chiefs or *micos*, breast, trunk, arms, thighs. . . . Commonly the sun, moon, and planets occupy the breast; zones or belts, or beautiful fanciful scrolls, wind round the trunk of the body, thighs, arms, and legs, dividing the body into many fields or tablets, which are ornamented or filled up with innumerable figures, as representations of animals of the chase,—a sketch of a landscape. . . . These paintings are admirably well executed and seem like *mezzotinto*. . . .<sup>10</sup>

To these comments must be added a passage from the *Travels*:

The pillars and walls of the houses of the square are decorated with various paintings and sculptures; which I suppose to be hieroglyphic, and as an historic legendary of political and sacerdotal affairs: but they are extremely picturesque or caricature, as men in variety of attitudes, some ludicrous enough, others having the head of some kind of animal, as those of a duck, turkey, bear, fox, wolf, buck, &c. and again those kind of creatures are represented having the human head. These designs were not ill executed; the outlines bold, free, and well proportioned (*Travels*, 455).

<sup>9</sup> Answer to Question 7 in John Howard Payne's *Commonplace Book*.

<sup>10</sup> *Transactions of the Am. Ethnological Society*, III, Part I, 18-19.



Seeing nature, then, as Bartram often did, from the point of view of a painter, his style has the linear and colorful flow of pictorial art. He has the ability to vivify a scene by means of a stroke here and a touch there. His descriptions abound in complete pictures—brilliant flashes, crisp miniatures, and, once in a while, a sprawling canvas:

The little gold-fish instantly fled from every side, darting through the transparent waters like streams of lightning . . . (pp. 43-44).

The ultimate angle of the branchiostega [of the red-belly fish] extends backwards with a long spatula, ending with a round, or oval particoloured spot, representing the eye in the long feathers of a peacock's train, verged round with a thin flame-coloured membrane, and appears like a brilliant ruby fixed on the side of the fish. . . . (p. 12).

They [the Snake Birds] delight to sit in little peaceable communities, on the dry limbs of trees, hanging over the still waters, with their wings and tails expanded, I suppose to cool and air themselves, when at the same time they behold their images in the watery mirror: at such times, when we approach them, they drop off the limbs into the water as if dead, and for a minute or two are not to be seen; when on a sudden at a vast distance, their long slender head and neck only appear, and have very much the appearance of a snake, and no other part of them is to be seen when swimming in the water, except sometimes the tip end of their tail. In the heat of the day they are seen in great numbers, sailing very high in the air, over lakes and rivers (p. 133).

The last passage is really a group of pictures, unmistakably of the type one is accustomed to call Japanese and Chinese, and those Bartram, by his own admission, saw "on the Chinese screens and other India pictures." An even more representative example of Bartram's Chinese-screen pictorial ability is his description of the wood pelican. He devotes two paragraphs to this bird, and, among other things, paints this sketch:

he stands alone on the topmost limb of tall dead Cypress trees, his neck contracted or drawn in upon his shoulders, and beak resting like a long scythe upon his breast: in this pensive posture and solitary situation, they look extremely grave, sorrowful and melancholy, as if in the deepest thought (p. 150).<sup>11</sup>

But the vividness of his art is not confined to descriptions of

<sup>11</sup> For the use that Wordsworth made of this passage see the next chapter.

birds, fishes, or flowers. Phenomena of nature receive the same bold treatment. Little of the grandeur and power of the sub-tropical gales he observed fails to be translated, as in the following description:

now the earth trembles under the peals of incessant distant thunder, the hurricane comes on roaring,<sup>12</sup> and I am shocked again to life: I raise my head and rub open my eyes, painted with gleams and flashes of lightning; when just attempting to wake my afflicted brethren and companions, almost overwhelmed with floods of rain, the dark cloud opens over my head, developing a vast river of the etherial fire;<sup>12</sup> I am instantly struck dumb, inactive and benumbed; . . . (p. 386).

A quality in Bartram's artistry which deserves special mention is his happy faculty of seizing upon the dominant trait of a particular scene or object and making it impressive and memorable. This descriptive method can best be designated by the French word "raccourci." By means of it Bartram often reduces a long, diffuse passage into a single unforgettable sentence or phrase and even when he begins his description with secondary aspects he can sum up its dominant impression, its distinctive character, in a "raccourci." The selective quality which such a method involves is of the highest artistic order, as only essentials must be seized upon. The frequency and ease with which Bartram employs this method are ample proof that he was never at a loss to detect the essence of a scene. Thus after describing an old champion alligator and his attitude toward the other alligators in the lake, Bartram writes: "He acts his part like an Indian chief when rehearsing his feats of war" (p. 130). Again, he compresses a long paragraph describing the sun fish into this vivid phrase: "a warrior in a gilded coat of mail" (p. 154). Or he finishes a description of the noise of frogs "uttered in chorus" with the striking comparison to "the rushing noise made by a vast quantity of gravel and pebbles together, at once precipitated from a height" (p. 278).

The diction of Bartram presents an interesting problem. It is a peculiar mixture. At times it is simple and straightforward, at other times it is stilted and florid. In the same paragraph, even in the same sentence, it may vary from austere clearness to

<sup>12</sup> For the use which Coleridge made of the last phrase see next chapter.

overlush vagueness, from bare exposition to imagistic rhapsody. So that both the commentators who, like Carlyle, have praised his style and those who, like Zimmermann, have condemned it can be said to have been justified according to their respective points of view; Carlyle liked Bartram's "eloquence," which he found in abundance, and Zimmermann, being a scientist, would have preferred Bartram's accurate observations without his rhapsodic overtones. The key to an understanding of Bartram's diction is, however, simple; it lies in a knowledge of his education, his reading, his Quaker upbringing, his scientific absorption, and his own personality, for, if ever style adequately expressed the man, Bartram's style surely and completely expressed Bartram. It is this complete self-expression of an interesting personality, of a man who could be "by turns enthusiastic, sober; dramatic, Idyllic; reflective, naive; diffusive, firm; redundant, precise,"<sup>13</sup> and, above all, natural, to which the vitality of his writings is due.

Bartram, as has been shown, was not highly educated. There is evidence that he attended the old college in Philadelphia and that for a time Charles Thomson was his tutor. The value of this education or whether he received any other is not known. It may reasonably be assumed that most of what real knowledge Bartram possessed came to him through his own efforts, picked up in a desultory way. At any rate, he never quite mastered the English language for literary purposes. His grammar is often shaky and his construction sometimes beyond his abilities, defects which account for the numerous minor "improvements" made in the London and subsequent editions of the *Travels*. And even in the editions where his English has been corrected such sentences as the following are still to be found: indeed the musquitoes alone would have been abundantly sufficient to keep any creature awake that possessed their perfect senses.<sup>14</sup>

his eyes red as burning coals, and his brandishing forked tongue of the colour of the hottest flame, continually menaces death and destruction, yet never strikes unless sure of his mark.<sup>15</sup>

the sooty sons of Afric forgetting their bondage, in chorus sung. . .<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Review of *The Travels in The Nation*, CXXVI (1928), 328.

<sup>14</sup> *Travels*, Van Doren ed., p. 128.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 222.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 257.

Nor was Bartram's reading without its influence on his literary style. The poetic diction of his purple passages is the same as that commonly found in eighteenth-century English poetry. Echoes of Pope have already been noted; it is reasonable to suppose that Bartram read other eighteenth-century English poets and that they left their impress upon his mind. At any rate, his diction frequently is reminiscent of the worst of Thomson, Gray, Collins, Akenside. It has what Professor Havens has called the "elegant pseudo-classic" note and the "vicious 'poetic diction' which blighted English poetry for a century, worming its way into the work even of the best and most natural poets of the time, and giving to many excellent productions an affected and artificial tone."<sup>17</sup> Bartram speaks of "cool eve's approach," of "feathered songsters," and "of leafy coverts" (*Travels*, pp. 81-2); of "solitary groves and peaceful shades" (p. 140); of resuming his "sylvan pilgrimage" (p. 153); of "the glorious sovereign of day, calling in his bright emanations" and leaving "in his absence . . . the milder government . . . of the silver queen of night, attended by millions of brilliant luminaries" (p. 190); of "winged emigrants" celebrating their nuptials (p. 287); of "those moral virtues which grace and ornament the most approved and admired characters in civil society" (p. 310). His tendency towards periphrases is obvious. Zimmermann, who was interested in Bartram's scientific facts and not his style, found this tendency irksome and in his translation trimmed down many passages to simple statements. "Schade," he wrote of Bartram, "das er mit allen diesen Vorzügen nicht auch einen guten Style verbindet. . . . Das Publikum wird mir daher hoffentlich Dank wissen, dass ich ihm in der Uebersetzung lesbarer zu machen gesucht, und von dem Ueberflüssigen vieles weggestrichen, oder es doch sehr zusammen gezogen habe."<sup>18</sup> As an example of Zimmermann's attempt to make Bartram "lesbarer," a comparison of the following passage from the *Travels* with Zimmermann's translation of it is instructive:

<sup>17</sup> Raymond Dexter Havens, "The Poetic Diction of the English Classicists," *Anniversary Papers by Colleagues and Pupils of George Lyman Kittredge*. Boston, 1913, pp. 437-38.

<sup>18</sup> E. A. W. Zimmermann, *Reisen*, pp. ix-x.



The glorious sovereign of day, cloathed in light refulgent, rolling on his gilded chariot, speeds to revisit the western realms. Grey pen-sive eve now admonishes us of gloomy night's hasty approach: I am roused by care to seek a place of secure repose, ere darkness comes on (*Travels*, 50).

Itzt kam der Abend heran, und erinnerte mich, einen sicheren Ruheort zu suchen (*Reisen*, 53).

Along with the echoes of eighteenth-century poetic diction Bartram's style carries a coloring of biblical expression. He was brought up in an atmosphere of simple piety and reverence for God, in a home where the Bible was read regularly and religiously. To the very end of his life John Bartram exhorted his children to "Love God & one another; extend charity to the necessitous and mercy to the distressed."<sup>19</sup> William Bartram's writings echo these sentiments in almost identical terms. In his letter to his nephew, Dr. James Bartram, he urges him to "Fear and adore the Divinity" and to "be charitable . . . to the poor and distressed." In his petition on Negro slavery he admonishes his fellow citizens to "do justice," to show "mercy" and to "fear God." And throughout his *Travels* he speaks of the "glorious display of the Almighty hand," "the most acceptable incense we offer to the Almighty," ". . . our God, who in due time will shine forth in brightness," "universal Father . . . with an eye of pity and compassion," "the wisdom and power of the supreme author of nature," "nature, at the command of the Supreme Creator," "thanksgiving to the Supreme Creator and preserver," "celestial endowments," "great altars and temples similar to the high places and sacred groves anciently amongst the Canaanites and other nations of Palestine and Judea." Some of his rhapsodic passages read like the spontaneous evocation of Quaker prayer, such, for instance, as the following:

How glorious the powerful sun, minister of the Most High, in the rule and government of this earth, leaves our hemisphere, retiring from our sight beyond the western forests! I behold with gratitude his departing smiles, tinging the fleecy roseate clouds, now riding far away on the Eastern horizon; behold they vanish from sight in the azure skies (*Travels*, 158)!

<sup>19</sup> MS. of eighteen pages in the *Bartram Papers*, in handwriting of John Bartram, but unsigned and undated.

It is in Bartram's scientific diction that the greatest measure of his originality is to be found. Tracy's statement that "The nature men have not given us new word-sets" but have only "used words in a new way"<sup>20</sup> is eminently true of Bartram. He has the faculty of welding together the most commonplace scientific nomenclature with the most gorgeous poetic imagery, so that ordinary vegetables and weeds and birds and snakes become glamorous objects of nature. Analyzed coldly this mixture of botany, ornithology, zoology, and poetry sometimes strikes one as somewhat ludicrous, even pathetic, as when he writes that "the vegetables smile in their blooming decorations and sparkling crystalline dew-drop" (*Travels*, 387), but read without any intent to dismember, Bartram's style soon begins to exert an effect which is far from unpleasant. Scientific term and poetic image merge perfectly, support and mellow each other, and create a mode of expression characteristic of the author-naturalist. Other botanical observers may have catalogued the following trees in a forest: "Fraxinus, Ulmus, Acer rubrum, Laurus Borbonia, Quercus dentata, Ilex aquafolium, Olea Americana, Morus, Gleditsia triacanthus, and . . . a species of Sapindus," but it is only Bartram who could add that the last species mentioned "spreads his brawny arms" and that the Live Oaks "strive while young to be upon an equality with their neighbors . . . but the others at last prevail, and their proud heads are seen at a great distance . . ." (p. 84). The touch of imagination changes a dull catalogue into a vivid reality. Sometimes the artistic transformation is accomplished by the phrase which introduces the catalogue, as when he states that "At this rural retirement were assembled a charming circle of mountain vegetable beauties, Magnolia auriculata, Rhododendron ferrugineum, Kalmia latifolia, . . ." (p. 342). The effect of this style upon the non-scientific reader can perhaps best be studied in the following comment of a modern reviewer of his *Travels*:

To a common reader like myself who am a lover of plants and flowers rather than a botanist, the recurring scientific nomenclature of the volume proves at first disconcerting, forbidding. I am shocked and chagrined to find how few of my familiar friends I am able to recognize

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<sup>20</sup> Henry Chester Tracy, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

in this guise. I stumble over such technical terms as "cordated appendage" and "incarnate lobes" and wonder whether to continue. However, I can and do appreciate "sportive vegetables" and am encouraged to go on. For there is much that I would see in this long-desired book.

Others have enjoyed it in spite of the obtruding nomenclature and so shall I. There is, I find, less of the technical than at first appears; or it may be that I become accustomed to it and learn that it does not matter. Names neither make nor mar the beauty of such a passage as. . .

. . . Did none of the volume's treasures escape the indefatigable Coleridge and Wordsworth? I seek in vain for such an omission—unless it be the "splendid fields of golden *Oenothera*" which I recognize as my friend the primrose.<sup>21</sup>

That Bartram's style is a perfect expression of his personality has already been suggested. Nature to Bartram was not cold and impersonal, but an object of love and reverence. All its manifestations partook of the miraculous. Nature was a vast unknown region for him to explore, but he did not stop with the accumulation of impersonal knowledge. His imagination played upon what he observed and drew personal meanings; it found beneath the surfaces a confirmation of the immanence of God and it delighted in the beauty of God's world. His exaltation carried him to rhapsodic exclamations and hyperbolic diction, but it also animated nature-description and imparted to it an imaginative glow. He abounds in such subjective epithets as "beautiful," "hideous," "disagreeable," "pleasant," "excellent," and in such superlatives as "incredible," "prodigious," "amazing," "magnificent," "intolerable," "extraordinary," "unparalleled," "exceedingly," and "irresistibly." The effect he is thus able to transmit is precisely what the effect of his travels was upon himself. It makes a reader in 1928 exclaim that "To be young was heaven for a naturalist in eighteenth-century America" and that "This is what the New World was like to a loving spirit, thrilled by nature, and conscious of beauty."<sup>22</sup> His "poetic diction," objectionable as it may be in the Classicist poets he read, is tolerable and at times not ineffec-

<sup>21</sup> "Browsing through Bartram," by F. H. *The Christian Science Monitor*, May 2, 1929.

<sup>22</sup> "Notes of a Rapid Reader," *The Saturday Review of Literature*, April 21, 1928.

tual in him, for it is not, in his case, "due to lack of imagination" or "to a lack of close observation of nature."<sup>23</sup> Bartram added both imagination and careful observation to nature description, and, above all, he is emotionally genuine and sincere. The fact is that while he was born and reared in the neo-classic period he came to maturity and did his writing in the period when Romantic tendencies were beginning to dominate. "Reason" and "rational" frequently appear in his pages, but also "imagination," "sublime," "sensibility." His very enthusiasm, his unrestrained enjoyment of nature, is what has come to be termed Romantic. Even his periphrases are not always the objectionable neo-classic circumlocution, "vague, unnatural, and mechanical . . . attempts to be elegant and poetical in an artificial way."<sup>24</sup> On the contrary, they are often imaginative and original attempts to convey an emotional response to the scene he describes. They are figurative evocations which transcribe not only the objects he saw but the mood which they engendered within him. Thus, to take a representative example, he translates his vision of the beating surf into a personification: "the dashing of yon liquid mountains, like mighty giants, in vain assail the skies; they are beaten back, and fall prostrate upon the shores of the trembling island" (*Travels*, 61). This is periphrastic description, to be sure, but it is founded upon accurate observation and effectively conveys the dramatic quality of the scene. Incidentally, the quotation at the same time indicates Bartram's sense of prose rhythm and his use of onomatopoeia and even alliteration—stylistic devices that come naturally to one whose sight is clear and whose emotion is genuine and spontaneous.

One other element in Bartram's art needs consideration, his narrative ability. The dynamic nature of his description has already been indicated, its movement and animation, but Bartram's gifts as a story-teller are largely responsible for this liveliness of his landscape. His *Travels* is primarily a narrative and Bartram never permits it to drag. His description is woven, in comparatively small increments, into the account of his movements and experiences. The very first three pages of his book

<sup>23</sup> R. D. Havens, *op. cit.*, p. 440.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 442.



take us from Philadelphia to South Carolina, and the rest of his account bristles with incidents, strange encounters, dramatic episodes, Indian legends, and complete short stories. His landscape ceases to be merely a colorful canvas spread before the eyes of a painter and becomes the background against which the heated spectacle of life is enacted. In spite of the apparent discursiveness of his narrative, Bartram has a directness of communication which springs from an instinctive perception of the dramatic elements of a situation. He selects his materials skilfully, knowing what to exclude, when to linger and when to move on.

In the course of his travels into the Indian territory he met many planters and traders. Their life is depicted not by long descriptions and speculations, but by sketching these men as he came in contact with them. He does not give a complete list of all his experiences and observations, but singles out a few of the numerous white people he has met and recounts a few episodes of their lives. Thus he tells us of the hospitality of the planters by recounting his reception at the plantation of Mr. McIntosh, who greeted him with the words: "Welcome, stranger; come in, and rest; the air is now very sultry; it is a very hot day," and of Mr. Bailey, who treated him "very civilly" (pp. 13, 15). Or he tells us of a friendly planter who housed him for three days while a storm raged outside, working "almost irreparable damages" everywhere in the neighborhood (p. 143). The life of the white traders among the Indians is pictured in a number of short stories. One of these tells of an unhappy trader "who had for a companion a very handsome Siminole young woman" who "dishonestly distributes amongst her savage relations . . . all his possessions," so that "he now endeavors to drown and forget his sorrows in deep draughts of brandy" (pp. 111-2). There is the incident of Mr. M'Latche who presumed to refuse credit to the proud Long Warrior, who thereupon threatened to command "the terrible thunder now rolling in the skies above, to descend upon your head, in rapid fiery shafts, and lay you prostrate at my feet" (pp. 258-59). And there is the story, already referred to, of the trader who had had an affair with the wife of an Indian chief and was threatened with having his ears cut off (pp. 447-8).

There are numerous incidents of encounters with Indians and in telling of these Bartram is able to arouse and maintain a suspense which indicates no mean narrative skill. His first description of meeting with an Indian alone in the forest is an apt illustration of his instinctive mastery of the narrative technique. Deftly he sketches in the setting: "It was drawing on towards the close of day, the skies serene and calm, the air temperately cool . . . the prospect around enchantingly varied and beautiful. . . ." Then comes the directness of his vision: ". . . on a sudden, an Indian appeared . . . armed with a rifle." Bartram's reaction to this threatening apparition, his endeavor to elude the Indian's sight by stopping and "keeping large trees between" them, at once sets the stage for a looming conflict. The antagonists take each other's measure, then the Indian "sat spurs to his horse, and came up on full gallop." The sentences that follow heighten the suspense, so that there is a genuine relief at the dénouement,

I never before this was afraid at the sight of an Indian, but at this time, I must own that my spirits were very much agitated: I saw at once, that being unarmed, I was in his power, and having now but a few moments to prepare, I resigned myself entirely to the will of the Almighty. . . . The intrepid Siminole stopped suddenly, three or four yards before me, and silently viewed me, his countenance angry and fierce, shifting his rifle from shoulder to shoulder and looking about instantly on all sides. I advanced towards him, and with an air of confidence offered him my hand, hailing him, brother; at this he hastily jerked back his arm, with a look of malice, rage, and disdain, seeming every way disconcerted;<sup>25</sup> when again looking at me more attentively, he instantly spurred up to me, and, with dignity in his look and action, gave me his hand.

The tenseness and compression of this incident is not diminished by the construction Bartram places upon the Indian's action in the unspoken words and Romantic sentiments he ascribes to him:

Possibly the silent language of his soul, during the moment of suspense (for I believe his design was to kill me when he first came up) was

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<sup>25</sup> The Van Doren edition substitutes "discontented" (p. 45), an emendation taken over from the London edition (p. 21).

after this manner: "White man, thou art my enemy, and thou and thy brethren may have killed mine; yet it may not be so, and even were that the case, thou art now alone, and in my power. Live; the Great Spirit forbids me to touch thy life; go to thy brethren, tell them thou sawest an Indian in the forests, who knew how to be humane and compassionate (pp. 20-21).

Not all of his Indian encounters are of this threatening nature, but they are interesting none the less. Trifling as they may turn out to be they are presented in a way which, for the moment, quickens the pulse with anticipation.

I had not left sight of my encampment, following a winding path through a grove of Live Oak, Laurel (*Magn. grandiflora*) and *Sapindus*, before an Indian stepped out of a thicket, and crossed the path just before me, having a large turkey cock, slung across his shoulders, he saw me and stepping up and smiling, spoke to me in English, bidding me good morning. I saluted him with "It's well brother," led him to my camp, and treated him with a dram (p. 75).

One other illustration will serve to emphasize the directness with which Bartram relates these encounters:

I took out of my wallet some biscuit and cheese, and a piece of neat's tongue, composing myself to ease and refreshment; when suddenly appeared within a few yards, advancing towards me from behind the point, a stout likely young Indian fellow, armed with a rifle gun, and two dogs attending, upon sight of me stood, and seemed a little surprised, as I was very much; but instantly recollecting himself and assuming a countenance of benignity and cheerfulness, he came briskly to me and shook hands heartily; and smiling enquired from whence I came, and whither going, but speaking only in the Cherokee tongue, our conversation was not continued for a great length (pp. 361-62).

However, it is in encounters which contain the element of danger that Bartram is at his best. In such cases he builds up, by subtle little touches, an atmosphere of real suspense. The antagonist need not always be an Indian. The limitless savannas and virgin forests are fraught with all sorts of dire possibilities, and one feels in reading Bartram that at any minute something may happen. To cite another example:

Observed a number of persons coming up a head which I soon perceived to be a party of Negroes: I had every reason to dread the consequence; for this being a desolate place, I was by this time several

miles from any house or plantation, and had reason to apprehend this to be a predatory band of Negroes: people being frequently attacked, robbed, and sometimes murdered by them at this place; I was unarmed, alone, and my horse tired; thus situated every way in their power, I had no alternative but to be resigned and prepare to meet them, as soon as I saw them distinctly a mile or two off, I immediately alighted to rest, and give breath to my horse, intending to attempt my safety by flight, if upon near approach they should betray hostile designs, thus prepared, when we drew near to each other, I mounted and rode briskly up; and though armed with clubs, axes and hoes, they opened to right and left, and let me pass peaceably . . . (pp. 471-72).

The same ability to portray a situation full of suspense is discernible in Bartram's encounters with animals. The element of conflict, so essential in any narrative, is never absent from his descriptions of these adventurous incidents. His fight with the alligators, a part of his book which has proved most memorable, is actually thrilling. First he describes a battle among the alligators themselves, which he has witnessed, a sort of prelude which causes his "apprehensions" to become "highly alarmed." To add to the atmosphere of danger, he sets down, with truly Poesque sensitiveness to the shadings of a situation, that "the sun was near setting." Then the battle begins. His canoe is "attacked on all sides" and his plight becomes "precarious to the last degree." The realism of the struggle is most meticulous and highly effective. His diction becomes precise and dramatic. Nouns become concrete and specific; verbs spring alive with action. "Two very large ones attacked me closely, at the same instant, rushing up with their heads and part of their bodies above the water, roaring terribly and belching floods of water over me. They struck their jaws together so close to my ears, as almost to stun me, and I expected every moment to be dragged out of the boat and instantly devoured" (pp. 118-19).

Equally thrilling are other scenes, in which Bartram himself was not an antagonist, often not even a participant, but merely a spectator. Such are the numerous hunting episodes or battles between animals which he describes. These are seldom purely objective descriptions but are colored either by pity or by a sense of the dramatic. There is the account, in the Introduction, of the killing of a mother bear and her cub, which "fell to weep-



ing and . . . cried out like a child" (p. xxvi). There is the description of Indians hunting deer, which moves with the tempo of the genuine story-teller:

The red warrior, whose plumed head flashes lightning, whoops in vain; his proud, ambitious horse strains and pants; the earth glides from under his feet, his flowing mane whistles in the wind, as he comes up full of vain hopes. The bounding roe views his rapid approaches, rises up, lifts aloft his antled head, erects the white flag, and fetching a shrill whistle, says to his fleet and free associates, "follow;" he bounds off, and in a few minutes distances his foe a mile; suddenly he stops, turns about, and laughing says, "how vain, go chase meteors in the azure plains above, or hunt butterflies in the fields about your towns (p. 188).

And there is the account of a battle between a hawk and a snake "that had wreathed himself several times round the hawk's body." The two, he tells us, finally "mutually agreed to separate themselves, each one seeking his own safety, probably considering me as their common enemy" (pp. 218-19).

Besides these stories of encounters between man and man, man and animals, and animals and animals, Bartram also relates many Indian stories. He picks up historical episodes and tribal legends and relates them with his usual gusto and charm, with especial care to their dramatic values. To these belong his account of the Indian's disagreement with the Georgians's determination of the land boundaries (pp. 39-40); his account of the origin of the Creek Confederacy (pp. 54-55); and the beautiful legend of the mythical island in Lake Ouaquaphenogaw,

a most blissful spot of the earth . . . inhabited by a peculiar race of Indians, whose women are incomparably beautiful; . . . this terrestrial paradise has been seen by some . . . enterprising hunters, when in pursuit of game, who being lost in inextricable swamps and bogs, and on the point of perishing, were unexpectedly relieved by a company of beautiful women, whom they call daughters of the sun, who kindly gave them such provisions as they had with them, which were chiefly fruit, oranges, dates, &c. and some corn cakes, and then enjoined them to fly for safety to their own country; for that their husbands were fierce men, and cruel to strangers. . . . (pp. 24-26).

The importance of Bartram's narrative ability becomes heightened if a comparison is made between his art and that of the

other travel writers who preceded him. There is neither vividness nor particularization in Catesby, Lawson, Byrd, or Carver. Lawson, for instance, frequently deals with situations similar to those described by Bartram, but they are neither dramatic nor memorable. He too mentions the hospitality of the planters, but in vague, general, and colorless terms. "About noon," he says, "we reached another island . . . ; there lived an honest Scot who gave us the best protection his Dwelling afforded. . . ."<sup>26</sup> Not the slightest attempt at individualization or dialogue. He also records encounters with Indians, but his record has no element of possible conflict and hence no suspense. "The next day about noon we accidentally met with a Southward Indian, amongst those that us'd to trade backward and forward, and spoke a little English, whom we hir'd. . . ." <sup>27</sup> One must conclude that it was not a mere accident that Bartram's *Travels* has remained a memorable book, a work of art in many respects, while the accounts of Lawson and his contemporaries have today but a mild historical interest.

Writing, one feels, was a pleasant art for Bartram. There is an ease about his style, a sense of effortlessness; he was a traveler with creative ability, a combination not often found among earlier travelers and seldom found among later travelers. His father, for example, "seems always to have handled the pen with a certain stiffness . . . he evidently does not feel at liberty with his inkhorn. It was this fact, doubtless, that tended to lose in the dust of the past a name that otherwise would have held its place with the greatest."<sup>28</sup> William Bartram's name, instead of being lost in the dust, is becoming more widely known. His art is alive. He saw the American landscape clearly,

<sup>26</sup> John Lawson, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>28</sup> *Harper's Magazine*, LX, 322. Also see *Popular Science Monthly*, XL, 834: "His observations are minute and sagacious, and his language is simple, but his sentences are loosely strung out, and the record is the barest statement of facts." However, Middleton has indicated that John Bartram "on occasion displayed an excellent command of English and an almost poetic finish in description" (*The Scientific Monthly*, XXI, 210), which merely, if granted, proves that William Bartram's descriptive talent is a flowering of a hereditary proclivity.

hugely enjoyed what he saw, and had the ability to dramatize it in words. One wonders what Bartram would have done with the Natural Bridge in Virginia. Thomas Jefferson spent a page and a half in his Notes and succeeded in conveying merely a few expository details. He talked about the fissure being 270 feet deep, 45 feet wide, 90 feet at the top; he talked about his looking down from the top and getting a violent headache; and when he became emotional he gave up describing altogether, exclaiming that "the rapture of the spectator is really indescribable."<sup>29</sup> The magnificence, the colors, the lights and shades, that Bartram would have seen and painted for us!

Bartram captured not only the aesthetic surfaces of nature, but the spirit of distance, solitude, and the unknown. Into the romantic remote he traveled and his days and nights pass before our eyes, the succession of morning, noon, and night, of sunrise and sunset and moonlight; we meet strange objects of nature, people, silence and solitude and song, and sunrise again, "the roseate morn."

<sup>29</sup> Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, pp. 34-35.





### PART THREE

## BARTRAM'S INFLUENCE ON LITERATURE



## BARTRAM'S INFLUENCE ON LITERATURE

The reasons for Bartram's influence on literature have been amply suggested in the preceding chapters. In an age when scientific eagerness and romantic interest in the remote and the exotic quickened the literary imagination of Europe, it was inevitable that Bartram's book should produce a profound impression. Myra Reynolds has indicated the widespread interest in Nature among the English poets of the eighteenth century, particularly in gardening, landscape, and travel.<sup>1</sup> Bissell and Fairchild have indicated an equally widespread interest in the American Indian on the part of eighteenth-century English writers generally.<sup>2</sup> All these elements, nature, landscape, travel, and Indians, are in Bartram's work. It is necessary to add, however, that, just as what is generally understood as the "Romantic Movement" was not confined to England alone, so was Bartram's popularity and hence his influence not confined to England alone. His *Travels* ran through two editions in England (1792, 1794), one in Ireland (1793), one in Germany (1793), one in Holland (1797), and one in France (1799).<sup>3</sup>

The extent of Bartram's influence on literature is not easily determined. Many complicating elements enter into such a study. Imaginative writers seldom leave their borrowings untransmuted into something new and different; they may draw upon a number of sources in a single phrase; they may merely echo a mood rather than a line or an epithet; and what may at first appear as a borrowing may prove to be a coincidental similarity of thought, phrase, or mood. In Bartram's case, however, there are many definite references and acknowledgements to his *Travels* in the work of many late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century writers, and modern literary scholarship has amassed a

<sup>1</sup> *The Treatment of Nature in English Poetry between Pope and Wordsworth*. Chicago, 1909.

<sup>2</sup> Benjamin Bissell, *op. cit.*; Hoxie Neale Fairchild, *op. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> Professor Lane Cooper also reports having seen "other versions at Lund, Stockholm, and Upsala" (*Nation*, LXXX, 152).

large amount of factual proof of literary indebtedness to Bartram. To summarize and bring together this mass of material, and to augment it with the result of a certain amount of original research is the aim of this more extended study.

### 1. *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*

Thirty-seven years ago Professor Aloys Brandl published a note book kept by Coleridge during the years 1795 to 1798.<sup>4</sup> In it Coleridge had set down, among many ideas of his own, some quotations from the books he happened to be reading at the time. A study of these quotations discloses that Coleridge had read Bartram's *Travels* with a great deal of attention, for he found many passages, sometimes whole pages, important enough to be copied into his notebook. Professor John Livingston Lowes, in his study of Coleridge's imagination, thus summarizes the impression that Bartram produced upon Coleridge:

Probably none of the books which Coleridge was reading during the gestation of "The Ancient Mariner" left more lively images in his memory than Bartram's *Travels*. The fascinating fifth chapter of Part Two in particular had awakened him to all manner of poetic possibilities, and prompted copious transcriptions in the Note book. And these transcripts form, as it happens, a significant cluster. The alligators . . . were set down from pages 127-30 of the *Travels*; the "little peaceable community" of snake-birds, from 132-33; the antiphonal roarings of the crocodiles and the thunder, from page 140; the wilderness plot, green, fountainous, and unviolated, from page 157; and the *Gordonia lasianthus*, from pages 161-62. Coleridge's memory, it is clear, had been greedily absorbing impressions from these thirty-odd pages. . . .<sup>5</sup>

The specific use that Coleridge made of these impressions from the *Travels* is a subject that leads us to Coleridge's poems.

Long before the finding of the Note Book Bartram's name was linked with the work of Coleridge by the poet himself. In a footnote to a passage in "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison"

<sup>4</sup> "S. T. Coleridges Notizbuch aus den Jahren 1795-1798." Herrig's *Archiv für das Studium der Neuren Sprachen und Litteraturen*. XCVII (1896), 333-372. The note book is in the British Museum (Add. MSS. 27901). It had belonged to Coleridge's school fellow, John Mathew Gutch.

<sup>5</sup> *The Road to Xanadu*, pp. 46-47.



he states that he has found in Bartram's *Travels* corroboration of an image he has used. The passage in question reads

. . . when the last rook  
 Beat its straight path along the dusky air  
 Homewards, I blest it! deeming its black wing  
 (Now a dim speck, now vanishing in light)  
 Had cross'd the mighty Orb's dilated glory,  
 While thou stood'st gazing; or, when all was still,  
*Flew creeking o'er thy head, . . .* (Ll. 68-74)

Coleridge's footnote reads:

Some months after I had written this line [italicized], it gave me pleasure to find that Bartram had observed the same circumstance of the Savanna Crane. "When these Birds move their wings in flight, their strokes are slow, moderate and regular; and even when at a considerable distance or high above us, we plainly hear the quill-feathers: their shafts and webs upon one another creek as the joints or working of a vessel in a tempestuous sea."

The poem, addressed to Charles Lamb, was written in July, 1797, and published in the *Annual Anthology* in 1800. Since the footnote definitely states that Coleridge read Bartram "some months after" he had written the poem, Ernest Hartley Coleridge naturally concluded that Coleridge's "first acquaintance with Bartram belonged rather to the end than to the earlier part of 1797" and "that the last rook 'flew creeking' some months before the Savanna crane had floated into his ken."<sup>6</sup> The further "unimpeachable evidence" which he offers in support of his conclusion has been invalidated by Professor Lowes's more recent study of the "Gutch Memorandum Book," and of other documents, especially the early drafts of "Lewti." Professor Lowes comes to the conclusion that the early drafts of "Lewti" date "from the end of 1794 or the beginning of 1795. And Coleridge knew Bartram when he wrote them."<sup>7</sup>

Both E. H. Coleridge and Professor Lowes are concerned especially with the expression "Flew creeking," which, E. H. Coleridge remarks, "is a strange one." Besides, however, the

<sup>6</sup> E. H. Coleridge, "Coleridge, Wordsworth, and the American Botanist William Bartram." *Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature of the United Kingdom*. Second Series. XXVII, 69-92.

<sup>7</sup> *Xanadu*, pp. 513-15.

passage from Bartram which Coleridge quoted in his footnote as proof of the accuracy of his observation, there is another passage in Bartram describing the flight of the Savanna crane:

Behold the loud, sonorous, watchful savanna Cranes (*grus pratensis*) with musical clangor, in detached squadrons. They spread their light elastic sail: at first they move from the earth heavy and slow; they labor and *beat the dense air*; they form the line with the wide extended wings, tip to tip; . . .<sup>8</sup>

The parallelism between Bartram's "beat the dense air" and Coleridge's "Beat . . . the dusky air," when considered along with the repetition of the "strange" expression "Flew creek-ing" from the other passage, suggests certain inferences. One is that Coleridge did not intend to imply in his footnote that he had read Bartram *for the first time* "Some months after" he had written "This Lime-Tree Bower," but that he had been rereading Bartram.<sup>9</sup> Another is that when he wrote his poem his imagination was stimulated by retentions from the two descriptions of the flight of Savanna cranes he had read in Bartram.

Further support of the belief that Bartram was in Coleridge's mind in the summer of 1797, when he wrote "This Lime-Tree Bower," is given by Professor Lowes in his contention that "the passage in the fourth act of *Osorio* (ll. 213-17; *Poems*, II, 573; cf. I, 184) is as unmistakably suggested by Bartram as is the corresponding picture in [Wordsworth's] 'Ruth' (ll. 67-78). And the fourth act of *Osorio* was written before Sept. 13, 1797 (*Poems*, II, 518; B. E. I, 140)." <sup>10</sup> Coleridge's passage reads

<sup>8</sup> *Travels*, p. 144, second London edition, 1794. It was this edition which Coleridge finally purchased in 1818, although he may have read an earlier edition before. (See *Xanadu*, p. 453).

<sup>9</sup> That Coleridge was in the habit of rereading books which interested him is quite clear. Thus he borrowed from the Bristol library *Poetic Tracts*, Vol. III, on March 2-20, 1795, and again on December 30, 1795 to January 28, 1796; Cudworth's *Intellectual System* on May 15-June 6, 1795, and again November 9-December 13, 1796; Benyowsky's *Memoirs* December 1-15, 1797, and again May 31-July 13, 1798 (Paul Kaufman, "The Reading of Southey and Coleridge: The Record of their Borrowings from the Bristol Library, 1793-98." *Modern Philology*, XXI, 319-20).

<sup>10</sup> *Xanadu*, p. 513.

He heard a voice distinctly; 'twas the youth's  
Who sung a doleful song about green fields,  
How sweet it were on lake or wild savannah  
To hunt for food, and be a naked man,  
And wander up and down at liberty.

But if these lines are influenced by Bartram, why not lines 230-35? They are spoken by the same character, Foster-Mother, and complete the story of the unhappy youth:

In spite of his dissuasion seized a boat,  
And all alone set sail by silent moonlight,  
Up a great river, great as any sea,  
And ne'er was heard of more; but it is supposed  
He lived and died among the savage men.

The truth seems to be that in both passages typical elements of Bartram's country are apparent: the green fields, the lake, the wild savannah, the hunt for food, the naked man, the wandering up and down at liberty, and, again, the silent moonlight, the "great river, great as any sea."<sup>11</sup>

However, there are more than these two passages in *Osorio* suggestive of Bartram. In Act I Albert speaks to Maria:

On a rude rock,  
A rock, methought, fast by a grove of firs  
Whose thready leaves to the low breathing gale  
Made a soft sound most like the distant ocean,  
I stay'd . . .  
The dews fell clammy, and the night descended,  
Black, sultry, close! and ere the midnight hour  
A storm came on, mingling all sounds of fear  
That woods and sky and mountains seem'd one havock!  
The second flash of lightning show'd a tree  
Hard by me, newly-scath'd (303-315).

Bartram's impressive storms have already been mentioned.<sup>12</sup> This passage recalls all the elements of a Bartram storm: "the furious winds and sweeping rains bent the lofty groves" (p.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Bartram's description of the way he set sail "alone" up the "great river" St. Johns, against the importunings of his host, Mr. Marshall (p. 77-78) and of the river where it widens into Lake George upon whose "swelling seas" Bartram's boat diminishes "to a nutshell" (p. 101).

<sup>12</sup> See Part II.





descended the peaceful stream [Altamaha], on whose polished surface were depicted the mutable shadows from its pensile banks . . . (p. 49).

Two other passages in *Osorio* are strongly reminiscent of Bartram. Alhadra soliloquizes of

. . . hanging woods, that touch'd by autumn seem'd  
 As they were blossoming hues of fire and gold,  
 The hanging woods, most lovely in decay,  
 The many clouds, the sea, the rock, the sands,  
 Lay in the silent moonshine; and the owl,  
 . . . the scritch owl only wak'd, . . .  
 It were a lot divine in some small skiff,  
 Along some ocean's boundless solitude,  
 To float for ever with a careless course,  
 And think myself the only being alive! (V, 39-56)

One recalls Bartram's woods and his "celebrated beauties . . . , fragrant Calycanthus, blushing Rhododendron . . . , perfumed Convalaria and fiery Azalea, flaming on the ascending hills or wavy surface of the gilding brooks" (pp. 322-23). Coleridge's "blossoming hues of fire and gold" bring to mind Bartram's memorable explanation:

The epithet fiery, I annex to this most celebrated species of Azalea, as being expressive of the appearance of it in flower, which are in general of the colour of the finest red lead, orange and bright, as well as yellow and cream colour; . . . clusters of the blossoms cover the shrubs in such incredible profusion on the hill sides, that suddenly opening to view from dark shades, we are alarmed with the apprehension of the hills being set on fire (p. 323).

Furthermore, in Alhadra's wish, taken with the preceding lines, one sees Bartram ascending the Altamaha in his "neat light cypress canoe," resigning his "bark to the friendly current" and floating past "rocky cliffs" and "forests" and "high projecting promontories" (pp. 48-9); one sees him emerge from under the "shady spreading boughs" of the live oaks and glimpsing the "boundless ocean" (pp. 58-59); and one recalls his being "awakened . . . by the terrifying screams of Owls" (p. 135).<sup>14</sup>

Just as surely one thinks of Bartram upon reading Albert's soliloquy:

<sup>14</sup> Also see listing of "the little screech owl," p. 289.

With other ministrations thou, O Nature!  
 Healest thy wandering and distemper'd child:  
 Thou pourest on him thy soft influences,  
 Thy sunny hues, fair forms, and breathing sweets,  
 Thy melodies of woods, and winds, and waters,  
 Till he relent, and can no more endure  
 To be a jarring and a dissonant thing  
 Amid this general dance and minstrelsy;  
 But bursting into tears wins back his way,  
 His angry spirit heal'd and harmoniz'd  
 By the benignant touch of love and beauty. (V, 126-136)

The phraseology is too general to permit the acceptance of parallels as proof of indebtedness, but the sentiment is so characteristic of Bartram's numerous tributes to Nature's hues and fair forms—woods and winds and waters—to its beauty, harmony, and benignity, that, when considered with the other lines in the play which apparently owe their inspiration and phraseology to Bartram, this passage must also be included among Coleridge's retentions from Bartram. Furthermore, it is obviously related to the "wilderness plot" and "Siminole" entries, both from Bartram, in the Gutch Memorandum Book.<sup>15</sup>

"The Ancient Mariner" discloses a variety of Bartram influences. Here we find identical phraseology and imagery and what E. H. Coleridge calls "a less verifiable but no less suggestive coincidence of moral feeling or sentiment."<sup>16</sup> Professor Lowes's study of the sources of this poem is exhaustive and needs no summary here, except in so far as Bartram is concerned. Coleridge was an omnivorous reader, and the tracing of echoes in only two poems, of which "The Ancient Mariner" is one, has led Professor Lowes to the writing of a volume of more than six hundred pages. By a diligent study of what Coleridge copied from Bartram into his Note Book and of the poem itself Professor Lowes sheds an interesting light on the workings of Coleridge's imagination and, incidentally, on his immense debt to Bartram.

Thus Professor Lowes points out that Coleridge's description of an aurora in "The Ancient Mariner" in the stanza

<sup>15</sup> Alois Brandl, *S. T. Coleridge's Notizbuch aus den Jahren 1795-1798*; quoted in *Xanadu*, pp. 5, 8, 11.

<sup>16</sup> *Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature*, pp. 69-92.

*The thick black cloud was cleft, and still  
 The Moon was at its side;  
 Like waters shot from some high crag,  
 The lightning fell with never a jag,  
 A river steep and wide,*<sup>17</sup>

was influenced by Bartram's description of a tempest:

How purple and fiery appeared the tumultuous(sic) clouds! *swiftly ascending or darting from the horizon upwards*; they seemed to oppose and dash against each other, the skies appeared streaked with blood or purple flame overhead, and flaming lightning streaming and darting about in every direction around, seems to fill the world with fire; whilst the heavy thunder keeps the earth in a constant tremor.<sup>18</sup>

"Strike out the clouds and the thunder," says Professor Lowes, "and that is an uncommonly vivid and typical description of an aurora."<sup>19</sup> Of course the images in the stanza are not all from Bartram; they are a merging of what he read in Bartram and in other books,<sup>20</sup> as well as what he had observed himself, such as the rays of light from his fire-place in his library at Keswick reflected in the garden, "that seemed burning in the bushes or between the trees."<sup>21</sup> In other words, "Bartram's lightning, falling like a river,"<sup>22</sup> played its part in the confluence of associations in Coleridge's mind which gave birth to the stanza.

All this becomes more certain when the stanzas immediately preceding the one quoted are examined. Here we find "And the coming wind did roar more loud," "And the rain poured down from one black cloud," "And soon I heard a roaring wind" and "But with its sound it shook the sails." In the

<sup>17</sup> Ll. 322-26. The italics are Professor Lowes's.

<sup>18</sup> *Travels*, 141. The italics are Professor Lowes's.

<sup>19</sup> *Xanadu*, p. 187.

<sup>20</sup> Professor Lowes cites Samuel Hearne's *A Journey from Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean*. London, 1795; De Maupertuis's *The Figure of the Earth, Determined from Observations Made by Order of the French King, at the Polar Circle*. London, 1738; David Crantz's *The History of Greenland* . . . London, 1767; and Frederick Martens's *Voyage into Spitzbergen and Greenland*. . . . 1694. For a note on auroras in Coleridge, Wordsworth and Byron, see Lane Cooper, "A Dissertation upon Northern Lights." *Modern Language Notes*, XXI, 44-46.

<sup>21</sup> *Works*, Shedd ed., 1854, II, 135.

<sup>22</sup> *Xanadu*, p. 188.

passage quoted from page 141 of Bartram's *Travels* we find "the hurricane comes on roaring" and "the heavy thunder keeps the earth in a constant tremor," which latter statement becomes the "sound [that] shook the sails."<sup>23</sup> Moreover echoes of the very same passage have already been noted in *Osorio*, a slightly earlier work.

In a study of "Wordsworth's Sources" <sup>24</sup> Professor Lane Cooper incidentally suggested the parallel between a memorable stanza in "The Ancient Mariner":

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky  
I heard the sky-lark sing;  
Sometimes all little birds that are,  
How they seemed to fill the sea and air  
With their sweet jargoning! (358-62)

and the following passage in Bartram:

In the spring of the year the small birds of passage appear very suddenly in Pennsylvania . . . at once the woods, the groves, the meads, are filled with their melody as if they dropped down from the skies. The reason or probable cause is their setting off with high and fair winds from southward; for a strong south and south-west wind about the beginning of April never fails bringing millions of these welcome visitors (p. 288).

That suggestion still stands as a highly plausible one, even though Professor Cooper has seen fit, twenty-five years later, to add a reservation. In a review of *The Road to Xanadu*, he takes issue with Professor Lowes's statement that the diction of "The Ancient Mariner" is mainly "determined by the words and phrases taken over from the travel-books," <sup>25</sup> believing that "Mr. Lowes on the whole underestimates the draft upon other sources." Professor Cooper now cites Gower and *The Tempest*

<sup>23</sup> "The sails themselves," remarks Professor Lowes, "that were *so thin and sere*, are the transfigured sails of the veritable ship from which the actual albatross was shot: 'Our sails,' wrote Captain Shelvocke, '. . . were now grown *so very thin and rotten*'." *Xanadu*, p. 192. The quotation from Shelvocke is from page 432 of Capt. George Shelvocke's *A Voyage round the World by Way of the Great South Sea* . . . London, 1726.

<sup>24</sup> *Athenaeum*, April 22, 1905, p. 499.

<sup>25</sup> *Xanadu*, p. 327.



as well as Bartram as possible sources of the stanza in question, and comes to the conclusion that "Here, then, for a single passage in *The Rime* are two, or three, reminiscences from 'the elder poets' as against one from a book of travels."<sup>26</sup> This too is plausible. However, the parallels first cited by Professor Cooper *are* striking, especially when we consider the use of Bartram that Coleridge made in several earlier stanzas in the same poem, such as in his description of a storm and of an aurora. Coleridge's "all little birds that are" which "seemed to fill the sea and air With their sweet jargonings" look suspiciously like Bartram's millions of "small birds" filling the "woods, the groves and meads . . . with their melody," and while Coleridge, being a poet, makes a specific bird, a sky-lark, "Sometimes a-dropping from the sky," yet Bartram's birds also appeared suddenly, "as if they dropped down from the skies."

In Part VII of "The Ancient Mariner" appears the line

And the owlet whoops to the wolf below (536)

upon which Professor Lowes remarks, "In that part of the book [Bartram's *Travels*] which Coleridge read most intently, only four pages from the Great Sink, a dozen from the Seminoles, and a score from the Savanna crane, Bartram tells of observing 'a company of *wolves . . . under a few trees . . . sitting on their hinder parts.*' 'We then whooped,' he adds.<sup>27</sup> And unless all signs fail, the owlet's whoop to the wolf below echoed in Coleridge's memory that whoop to the wolves in Florida."<sup>28</sup>

Two other passages in the poem invite comment. One is the lines about the water-snakes which the Mariner watched:

Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,  
They coiled and swam; and every track  
Was a flash of golden fire (79-81).

According to Professor Lowes the snakes themselves came out of Edward Cooke's *Voyage to the South Sea, and Round the World in 1708-11*,<sup>29</sup> but part of their coloring was suggested by Bartram's bream or sun fish: "pale gold (or burnished

<sup>26</sup> *P. M. L. A.*, XLII, 589-590.

<sup>28</sup> *Xanadu*, pp. 215-16.

<sup>27</sup> *Travels*, 199.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 479.



brass) colour . . . the scales . . . powdered with *red*, russet, silver, *blue* and *green* specks," while at the gills is "a little spatula . . . encircled with silver, and *velvet black*" (*Travels*, pp. 153-54). Coleridge's reminiscences, Professor Lowes believes, coalesced, the bream's velvet black completing the water-snakes' rich attire.<sup>30</sup> However, E. H. Coleridge, in an earlier study, has suggested that even the snakes themselves came out of Bartram. He refers to the episode related by Bartram who had gone during the night many times to a spring to fetch water, and later found by daylight that the fountain was guarded by a huge rattlesnake. Bartram refused to kill the snake, inasmuch as the "generous creature" had spared him and his companions. "If Coleridge read this passage," E. H. Coleridge remarks, "no doubt he read it with approval."<sup>31</sup> Combining Professor Lowes's hypothesis of Bartram's influence on the coloring of Coleridge's water-snakes with E. H. Coleridge's suggestion the *if* in the latter's statement becomes considerably lessened. But a further strengthening of the hypothesis of Bartram's influence on these lines is possible. Bartram's reaction to the episode is significant. "My imagination and spirits," he says, "were in a tumult, almost equally divided betwixt thanksgiving to the Supreme Creator and preserver, and the dignified nature of the generous though terrible creature" (p. 269). The Mariner narrates that, upon beholding the water-snakes,

A spring of love gushed from my heart,  
And I blessed them unaware (284-85).

The other passage which invites comment is the stanza

He prayeth best, who loveth best  
All things both great and small;  
For the dear God who loveth us,  
He made and loveth all (614-17).

Here the indebtedness to Bartram, if there be any, is manifestly of the type which E. H. Coleridge calls a "coincidence of moral feeling and sentiment." The following address to singing birds in Bartram is credited by E. H. Coleridge with the responsibility for this coincidence:

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>31</sup> *Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature.*

Ye vigilant and faithful servants of the Most High! ye who worship the Creator, morning, noon, and eve, in simplicity of heart; I haste to join the universal anthem . . . O universal Father! look down upon us we beseech thee, with an eye of pity and compassion, and grant that universal peace and love, may prevail in the earth, even that divine harmony, which fills the heavens, thy glorious habitation (pp. 100-101).

It is possible that it was with the Philadelphia Quaker offering his devout prayer in the wilderness in Coleridge's mind that he wrote

He prayeth best, who loveth best  
All things both great and small.

One may not be justified in going as far as Professor Gummere has gone in his statement that "Coleridge . . . got his best matter for his best poem from an old book of travels,"<sup>32</sup> for it is not so easy to decide what constitutes "best matter," but that "The Ancient Mariner" owes a considerable debt to Bartram's *Travels* is certain.

Images retained from Bartram crop up again in other poems of Coleridge. The owls that "wake" in *Osorio* and "hoot" in "The Ancient Mariner" hoot again in "Christabel," although in the latter poem they may have coalesced with the memories of owls in the neighborhood of Stowey and with Shakespeare's owls.<sup>33</sup> That Coleridge could not have avoided thinking of Bartram at the time of writing "Christabel" is clear from his Note Book. Just before an entry from Bartram's description of "the alligators' terrible roar" appear the lines

Behind the thin  
Grey cloud that cover'd but not hid the sky  
The round full moon look'd small,<sup>34</sup>

which become transformed as lines 16-19 of "Christabel."

It is more certain that Coleridge used another episode from Bartram at least three times. The dream of Bracy the bard who saw a dove (symbol of Christabel) "Fluttering, and uttering fearful moan" and found, when he stooped to take it,

<sup>32</sup> Francis B. Gummere, *Democracy and Poetry*, 1911, p. 107.

<sup>33</sup> *Love's Labour's Lost*, Act v, scene 2.

<sup>34</sup> Gutch Memorandum Book, p. 39.

a bright green snake  
Coiled round its wings and neck (594-50)

came out of a passage, which also gave rise to  
the huge  
serpent often hissed there beneath the talons of the vulture, and the  
vulture screamed, his wings imprisoned within the coils of the serpent  
("The Wanderings of Cain," ll. 78-81)

and to

Or, like an eagle, whose strong wings press up  
Against a coiling serpent's folds, can I  
Strike but for mockery, and with restless beak  
Gore my own breast? . . . ("Zapolya", 89-92) <sup>35</sup>

The Bartram passage reads:

The high road being here open and spacious . . . I observed a large hawk on the ground in the middle of the road: he seemed to be in distress endeavoring to rise; when, coming up near him, I found him closely bound up by a very long coach-whip snake, that had wreathed himself several times round the hawk's body, who had but one of his wings at liberty. . . . I suppose the hawk had been the aggressor . . . and that the snake dexterously and luckily threw himself in coils round his body (pp. 218-19) <sup>36</sup>

Coleridge used three different birds in his three poems, to suit his respective needs or moods, but they are clearly all derived from Bartram's hawk. The details of the conflict between the dove and the snake in "Christabel" support this view:

Close by the dove its head it crouched;  
And with the dove it heaves and stirs,  
Swelling its neck as she swells hers! (551-54)

If we accept the premise that Bartram was fresh in Coleridge's mind at the time he wrote "Christabel," a premise highly justified, in view of the parallels pointed out above, Bersch's

<sup>35</sup> Georg Bersch in his Inaugural-Dissertation, *S. T. Coleridges Naturschilderungen in seinen Gedichten* (Marburg, 1909) was, I believe, the first to point to these three instances (p. 101) of the same episode and to relate them to Bartram.

<sup>36</sup> Quoted also in Ernest Hartley Coleridge's facsimile edition of "Christabel" for the Royal Society of Literature, London, 1907, p. 91. E. H. Coleridge's quotation is from the 1794 edition of the *Travels*, pp. 216-17.

suggestion that Coleridge modeled the "snaky" nature of Lady Geraldine upon Bartram's descriptions of snakes deserves attention, although it is, at first blush, far-fetched. We know that Coleridge entered long extracts from Bartram into his Note Book just about the time when he worked on "Christabel." Lady Geraldine, Bersch observes, has "A snake's small eye" (l. 583) and a "look of dull and treacherous hate!" (l. 606), yet Christabel finds herself under the spell of those eyes so that "what she knew she could not tell, O'er-mastered by the mighty spell" (ll. 619-20). Now Bartram, speaking of rattlesnakes, tells us that "They are supposed to have the power of fascination in an eminent degree, so as to inthral their prey . . . they charm birds, rabbits, squirrels and other animals, and by steadfastly looking at them possess them with infatuation."<sup>37</sup> However, Coleridge may have read about this charming power of snakes long before he came upon Bartram, for the tradition is well-known in literature.

Coleridge's use of one episode or one image more than once is disclosed by more than his employment of the conflict between a bird and a snake in three poems—"Christabel," "The Wanderings of Cain," and *Zapolya*. We have noted the owls in *Osorio*, in "The Ancient Mariner" and in "Christabel." They hoot once more in "Frost at Midnight." In this poem the "owlet's cry" comes "loud—and hark, again! loud as before." The relation of this owlet to Bartram is not so certain as that of the owlet in "The Ancient Mariner" whooping to the wolf below, but there are other lines in "Frost at Midnight" which indicate that Bartram was in Coleridge's mind when he wrote the poem. The calm which "vexes" his meditation with "its strange and extreme silentness" makes him think at the same time of the

Sea, and hill, and wood,  
With all the numberless goings-on of life,  
Inaudible as dreams! *the thin blue flame*  
*Lies on my low-burnt fire*, and quiver not (ll. 8-14).

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<sup>37</sup> P. 267. See Bersch, *op. cit.*, p. 102. E. H. Coleridge, however, cites a passage from M. G. Lewis's *Ambrosio, or The Monk* as a possible source for Coleridge's snake charm ("Christabel," pp. 92-93).



While it is true that any keen observer of a fire might remember the appearance of a flame in a hearth, yet memory may have been at least stimulated by Bartram's description of his resting on a wooded bank of the "peaceful Alatomaha," his "barque securely moored," while his "*fire burnt low; the blue smoke scarce rising above the . . . embers . . .*" (pp. 50-51).

Later, Coleridge's vision of his boy's destiny has the authentic coloring of Bartram:

But *thou*, my babe! shalt wander like a breeze  
By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags  
Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,  
Which image in their bulk both lake and shores  
And mountain crags: so shalt thou see and hear  
The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible  
Of that eternal language, which God  
Utters, who from eternity doth teach  
Himself in all, and all things in himself,  
Great universal Teacher! . . .

(54-63)

The pantisocracy dream is evidently not yet dead, nor the "wilderness plot" out of Bartram. Here the landscape and the sentiment of Bartram meet once more in Coleridge's mind. For to Bartram, too, observing the "lovely shapes" of lakes, shores, crags, mountains, clouds, nature "is the work of God omnipotent" (p. xxiv); it is the expression of the "power, majesty, and perfection of the great Almighty Creator" (p. 73); of the "universal sovereign" (p. 100).

A more obvious use of Bartram's Altamaha appears in "Lewti." Here Coleridge locates his lover by "Tamaha's stream." But what this poem owes to Bartram has been capitally summarized by Professor Lowes in a compact footnote paragraph. "The poem," says Professor Lowes, "is a night-piece on the 'Tamaha'; there are rocks by the river (*Poems*, II, 1049-51; cf. I, 253); there is the 'radiant edge' of the moon, peeping below a black-arched cloud (II, 1050), and the shadow of a star (I, 253), and there are waves breaking against a curved and distant shore (I, 253, n.; II, 1050)." Professor Lowes then draws parallels from Bartram's night-piece on the Alatomaha (p. 51); on the sides of the river are rocky cliffs (p. 49) and "high shores" (p. 50), which compare with Coleridge's "High



o'er the rocks at night I rov'd" (II, 1051); Bartram observes an eclipse of the moon, of which, "at length" only "a silver thread alone" remains visible and "the late starry skies" are "now overcast by thick clouds" (p. 51); there are shadows in the river (p. 49); later Bartram reaches the mouth of the river and describes the waves of the sea on the beach (pp. 59-60). There can, of course, be no question that Coleridge's "gentle river" (I, 255) is Bartram's "Alatamaha! *gentle* by nature" (p. 51). An early draft of the poem gives its title as "The Wild Indian's Love-Chaunt" (*Poems*, II, 1050), and Coleridge's interest in Bartram's Indians is shown by his Note Book entry:

The Life of the Siminole playful from infancy to Death compared to the Snow, which in a calm day falling scarce seems to fall and plays and dances in and out, to the very moment that it reaches the ground—<sup>38</sup>

The connection between the Altamaha and the Indians is made clear by Bartram, who "ascended this beautiful river, on whose fruitful banks the generous and true sons of liberty securely dwell" (p. 42). Professor Lowes is surely justified in coming to the conclusion that "No one who reads the three or four consecutive pages in Bartram can well doubt that they inspired the setting of 'Lewti'";<sup>39</sup> *setting*, however, is, in this case, too modest a claim for Bartram, unless the word be considered to include both the atmospheric and physical coloring of the poem, and even then one would have to add certain definite images and the wandering lover himself.

In Coleridge's Note Book appears the entry: "Describe the never-bloomless Furze and then transi to the Gordonia Lasi-anthus." The rest is a long transcript of Bartram's description of that "tall aspiring" tree from pp. 161-162.<sup>40</sup> The never-bloomless furze later crept into line 6 of "Fears in Solitude" while the Gordonia apparently was not utilized (except by Wordsworth). Yet Coleridge when he wrote of

<sup>38</sup> Fol. 36a; *Archiv*, pp. 360-61. *Travels*, pp. 212-13. See also *Xanadu*, p. 11.

<sup>39</sup> *Xanadu*, p. 514.

<sup>40</sup> *Archiv*, pp. 359-60; *Xanadu*, p. 9.

that swelling slope,  
Which hath a gay and gorgeous covering on,  
All golden with the never-bloomless furze, (ll. 4-6)

could hardly have failed to think of Bartram. The *Gordonia*, with which the furze was associated in the Note Book and, inevitably in Coleridge's mind, does not appear in the poem, but other echoes of Bartram, of the native habitat of the *Gordonia Lasianthus*, do. There is a "green and silent spot, amid the hills" and "The minstrelsy that solitude loves best" and "Religious meanings in the forms of Nature!" A suspicion creeps in that Coleridge in his idealization of England saw a good deal of Bartram's country with its "fields," its "clouds," its "rocky shores," its "seas," its "streams and wooded hills" (*Poems*, I, 262).

Attention has been called to Coleridge's use of Bartram's description of a fight between a hawk and a snake in "The Wanderings of Cain." Bersch has expressed a belief that the wild animals mentioned in this poem, as well as in "Religious Musings,"<sup>41</sup> were suggested by Coleridge's reading of Bartram.<sup>42</sup> The best proof of this assertion was given by Ernest Hartley Coleridge when he published a rough draft of the poem, which he had found among Coleridge's papers. In it occurs the statement that Cain and the evil shape that guides him come "to an immense gulph filled with water, whither they descend, followed by alligators,"<sup>43</sup> and we know that Bartram's alligators found a place in Coleridge's Note Book. To the alligators, the snake and the vulture, must be added at least the bison (I, 289) as definitely coming out of Bartram; the other animals,

<sup>41</sup> No one has noticed, however, that in this poem there is more than the wild animals to suggest Bartram. While Coleridge quotes a passage from Bruce's *Travels* (vol. 4, p. 557) as the source of his simoom, his description of other storms strongly recalls Bartram; e. g., "the mad careering of the storm" (l. 245), "wild and wavy chaos" (l. 246), "fruit Shook from the figtree by a sudden storm" (l. 314). Also the landscape, foliage and sentiment recall Bartram: "sea-breeze," "blossoms," "wafted perfumes," "many-tinted streams," "gorgeous company of clouds," "precious fountain," "green herbs," "landscape streams with glory!", "Nature more medicinal than . . . soft balm."

<sup>42</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 101.

<sup>43</sup> *Athenaeum*, Jan. 27, 1894, p. 114.

such as the squirrel, the lion, the lark, are not necessarily confined to Bartram's region, although even they may have suggested themselves by a reading of the *Travels*.

The landscape generally is reminiscent of Bartram. "Midnight on the Euphrates," with "cedars, palms, pines" (I, 286), is again suspiciously like Bartram's night-piece on the Altamaha. The description that follows changes the suspicion into a certainty, for here we get the "ragged rock" of a cavern overlooking the Euphrates, "the moon rising on the horizon" (cf. Bartram's "the moon majestically rising in the east," p. 50, and "the moon about an hour above the horizon," p. 51); and the *immense gulph with the alligators* (I, 286). The "immense meadow so surrounded as to be inaccessible" is a replica of the "extensive Alachua savanna . . . encircled with high-sloping hills" (p. 187). "For the torrent that roareth far off hath a voice" is another echo of Bartram's storms and recalls Coleridge's entry, from Bartram, into the Note Book: "the distant thunder sounds heavily—the crocodiles answer it like an echo—" <sup>44</sup>

"Kubla Khan" owes to Bartram a great deal of its imagery. The dream of the poem was stimulated by Purchas, whom Coleridge had been reading just before he fell asleep, but, as Professor Lowes has remarked, "there were sufficient links between the images from Purchas which were sinking into the Well and the images from Bartram which were already there. And they did coalesce." <sup>45</sup> The background of the poem, Coleridge's "savage place," with its "gardens bright with sinuous rills" and its "forests ancient as the hills, Enfolding sunny spots of greenery," unmistakably came out of Bartram. In the Note Book Coleridge had entered:

—some wilderness-plot, green and fountainous and unviolated by Man, <sup>46</sup>

and here we have this "wilderness-plot" memorandum worked into a poem. That the memorandum was a result of the reading of Bartram is quite certain. It appears between two entries that are transcripts of Bartram's crocodiles or alligators (*Travels*, 127-30). Then follow entries from subsequent pages of Bar-

<sup>44</sup> *Archiv*, p. 359.

<sup>45</sup> *Xanadu*, p. 366.

<sup>46</sup> *Archiv*, p. 359.

tram. Coleridge could not have missed Bartram's description of the "enchanting little Isle of Palms" on page 157, a "*blessed unviolated spot of earth!*" nor of Bartram's own predicament when, on the next page, he finds himself "alone in the wilderness of Florida."

Bartram's "enchanting Isle" rises "from the limpid waters of the lake; its fragrant groves and blooming lawns invested and protected by encircling ranks of the *Yucca gloriosa*; a fascinating atmosphere surrounds this blissful garden; the balmy *Lantana*, ambrosial *Citra*, perfumed *Crinum*, perspiring their mingled odours, wafted through *Zanthoxylon* groves." When Bartram at last "breaks away" from "the enchanting spot" he traverses a "capacious semi-circular cove of the lake, verged by low, extensive grassy meadows." Can we then fail to recognize the source of Coleridge's

. . . gardens bright with sinuous rills,  
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;  
And . . . forests ancient as the hills,  
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery (ll. 8-11),

or of his "green hill athwart a cedarn cover!" (l. 13)? But Coleridge's wilderness-plot called for a fountain, for it was to be "green and *fountainous*." That too was supplied by Bartram. Six pages beyond the Isle of Palms description Coleridge read:

I seated myself upon a *swelling green knoll* at the head of the chrystal bason. Near me, on the left, was a point or projection of an entire grove of the aromatic *Illisium Floridanum*; . . . in front, just under my feet was the *enchanting and amazing chrystal fountain*. . . . (p. 165).

When Coleridge writes that

. . . from this chasm, *with ceaseless turmoil seething*,  
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,  
A mighty fountain *momently* was forced:  
Amid whose swift half-intermittent burst  
Huge *fragments vaulted* like rebounding hail,  
Or *chaffy grain* beneath the thresher's flail:  
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever  
*It flung up momentarily the sacred river* (ll. 17-24),



we know that he had read on in Bartram, for Bartram's chrystal fountain too

incessantly threw up, from dark, rocky caverns below, tons of water *every minute*. . . . About twenty yards from the upper edge of the bason . . . is a *continual and amazing ebullition, where the waters are thrown up in such abundance and amazing force*, as to jet and swell up two or three feet above the common surface: *white sand and small particles of shells are thrown up with the waters* (pp. 165-166).

Moreover, Coleridge's sacred river ran "Five miles meandering. . . . Through wood and dale" then "reached the caverns. . . . And sank . . ." (ll. 25-28) and the waters of Bartram's fountain form a creek which "meanders six miles through green meadows" and when these waters have "thrown up" they "diverge from the center, *subside* with the expanding flood, and gently *sink* again" (pp. 156-166).

Professor Lowes, Mr. E. H. Coleridge, and Dr. Bersch believe that into this reworking of Bartram's chrystal fountain enter also descriptions of other fountains found in Bartram. On pages 239-40 there appears an account a trader gave Bartram of a visit to "a very curious place, called the Alligator-Hole" (p. 238):

he saw the earth overflowed by torrents of water . . . attended with a terrific noise and tremor of the earth . . . he . . . soon came in sight of the incomparable fountain, and saw, with amazement, the floods rushing upwards many feet high, and the expanding waters. . . . It continued to jet and flow in this manner for several days, forming a large . . . river, descending and following the various . . . windings of the valley, for the distance of seven or eight miles, emptying itself into a vast savanna, where . . . was . . . a sink which received . . . its waters. . . . At places where ridges or a swelling bank . . . opposed its course and fury, are *vast heaps* of fragments of rocks, white chalk, stones and pebbles, which were . . . thrown into the lateral valleys.

Just which of these descriptions, of the chrystal fountain or of the Alligator-Hole, suggested Coleridge's fountain is not easy to decide with absolute certainty; Professor Lowes's conclusion that in Coleridge's dream the images from both descriptions coalesced is a happy suggestion. But Bersch's addition of Bartram's description of "the admirable Manate Spring" cannot be overlooked:



The ebullition is astonishing, and continual, though its greatest force or fury *intermits*, regularly, for the space of thirty seconds of time . . . the ebullition is perpendicular upwards, from a vast ragged orifice through a bed of rocks . . . throwing up small particles or pieces of white shells, which subside with the waters, at the moment of intermission. . . . (p. 231).

The influence of Bartram on Coleridge was even greater than the preceding pages have indicated it to have been. One must repeat the words of an anonymous reviewer of Van Doren's Bartram: "Good water is left in the well, and indeed Coleridge took more than even the industry of Professor Lowes in his *Xanadu* has discovered."<sup>47</sup> Even more, one must add, than this summary has disclosed. Coleridge's interest in Bartram's *Travels* continued throughout his life. Twenty years after he had written "The Ancient Mariner," "Kubla Khan," and the other poems in which Bartram's influence has been traced, or to be precise, in 1818, Coleridge purchased a copy of the *Travels*.<sup>48</sup> Bartram came into his mind when, in the *Biographia Literaria*, he wished to describe Wordsworth, of whom he wrote:

The following analogy will, I am apprehensive, appear dim and fantastic, but in reading Bartram's *Travels* I could not help transcribing the following lines as a sort of allegory, or connected simile and metaphor of Wordsworth's intellect and genius. "The soil is a deep, rich, dark mould, on a deep stratum of tenacious clay; and that on a foundation of rocks, which often break through both strata, lifting their backs above the surface. The trees which chiefly grow here are the gigantic black oak; magnolia magni-floria; fraxinus excelsior; platane; and a few stately tulip trees."<sup>49</sup>

<sup>47</sup> *The Saturday Review of Literature*, April 21, 1928.

<sup>48</sup> *Poems*, I, 460; *Xanadu*, p. 453.

<sup>49</sup> II, 128-129. Ed. Shawcross. Coleridge evidently quoted from memory. The passage in Bartram's *Travels* reads: "The soil is a deep, rich, dark mould, on a deep stratum of reddish brown tenacious clay, and that on a foundation of rocks which often break through both strata, lifting their backs above the surface. The forest trees are chiefly of the deciduous order, as *Quercus tinctoria*, . . . *Magnolia acuminata*, *Liriodendron*, *Platanus*, *Fraxinus excelsior* . . ." (p. 36). "Magnolia magni-floria" is, as Professor Lowes has observed (*Xanadu*, p. 453), a faulty recollection of the magnolia grandiflora, mentioned by Bartram on pp. 29, 73, 169. And, it should be added, so are the names of the other trees mentioned by Coleridge, unless, to add another possibility, they may be

In 1827 Bartram was still in Coleridge's mind, for on March 12 of that year he remarked<sup>50</sup> that "the latest book of travels I know, written in the spirit of the old travellers, is Bartram's account of his tour in the floridas."

## 2. *William Wordsworth*

Wordsworth's interest in travel literature was as keen as that of Coleridge. That he read widely in this type of literature has been proved in a series of articles by Professor Lane Cooper,<sup>1</sup> who believes that Wordsworth "read . . . practically all voyages by land or sea that friends could place at his disposal." Dr. Lienemann in his monograph on Wordsworth's reading attributes this interest of the Lake poet in books of travel to his general passion for traveling and wandering. "Wordsworth," he claims, "regretted greatly that his means did not permit him in his younger years to undertake long journeys."<sup>2</sup> But whatever the cause may have been it is certain that Wordsworth "had at all times a passion for the literature of travel, and insisted on its value in widening his outlook and enriching his experience."<sup>3</sup> In a letter to James Tobin, written some months before the publication of *Lyrical Ballads*, he says: "If you could collect for me any books of travels you would render me an essential service, as without much of such reading my present labours cannot be brought to any conclusion."<sup>4</sup> The last part of the

his translation and poetic transmutation of Bartram's scientific names: *quercus tinctoria* becoming "the gigantic black oak" and *Liriodendron* becoming "a few stately tulip trees."

<sup>50</sup> *Table Talk*, p. 43.

<sup>1</sup> See especially "Wordsworth Sources," *Athenaeum*, April 22, 1905, pp. 498-500, and "A Glance at Wordsworth's Reading," *Modern Language Notes*, XXII, 83-89, 110-117, reprinted in *Methods and Aims in the Study of Literature*, 1915, pp. 96-132.

<sup>2</sup> K. Lienemann, *Die Belesenheit von William Wordsworth*, Berlin, 1908, p. 166. The section devoted to "Reisebeschreibungen" (pp. 166-172) lists a great many travel books which Wordsworth read, among them (p. 169), "Travels through North and South Carolina by William Bertram [sic]."

<sup>3</sup> *The Prelude*, edited by Ernest de Selincourt, Oxford, 1926, p. xxix.

<sup>4</sup> *Letters of the Wordsworth Family*, I, 115.

sentence points to the use which Wordsworth made of such reading; in this case it amounted to his absolute dependence upon it. Naturally, his poetry reflects this extensive reading of travel literature and it is therefore not surprising for Prof. de Selincourt to find that "the pages of *The Prelude*," for instance, "are studded with simile, metaphor, and allusion drawn from the narration of famous navigators, and explorers of unknown continents."<sup>5</sup>

Exactly when Wordsworth read Bartram's *Travels* is unknown. Professor Cooper believes that the poet "became familiar with Bartram . . . at Alfoxden"<sup>6</sup> and that "if he did not carry Bartram's *Travels* . . . with him to Germany, he must have had that entertaining journal almost by heart before he started."<sup>7</sup> The last statement is especially plausible, for it is in a note to "Ruth," written in Germany and published in 1800, that Wordsworth specifically refers to Bartram: "The splendid appearance of these scarlet flowers," he writes, explaining lines 64-66, "which are scattered with such profusion over the Hills in the Southern parts of North America is frequently mentioned by Bartram in his *Travels*."<sup>8</sup> However, there is no definite reason for assuming that Wordsworth could not have read Bartram before Alfoxden. The Palestinian and Syrian landscape of *The Borderers* (composed in 1795-6), like the landscape in Coleridge's "Wanderings of Cain," seems tinged with Bartram, and the pelican of the desert in III, 220 is very much the bird which, later, more elaborately comes out of Bartram into the third book of *The Prelude*.

In spite of Wordsworth's own reference to Bartram, it was not until 1893 that a definite claim of an indebtedness to Bartram appears in an anonymous review of Dowden's Aldine edition of Wordsworth's poems.<sup>9</sup> "It is not a little to be regretted," says the reviewer, "that Wordsworth's references to

<sup>5</sup> *The Prelude*, p. xxix.

<sup>6</sup> *Modern Language Notes*, XXII, 113.

<sup>7</sup> *Methods and Aims in the Study of Literature*, p. 110. Wordsworth moved to Alfoxden in July, 1797, and left for Germany in September, 1798 (G. M. Harper, *William Wordsworth, his Life, Works and Influences*, I, 316, 362).

<sup>8</sup> *Poems*, II, 108.

<sup>9</sup> *The Athenaeum*, August 12, 1893, pp. 218-20.

Bartram's 'Travels' should have escaped Prof. Dowden's attention. That fascinating book was a great favourite with both Coleridge and Wordsworth in Quantockian days, and traces of its picturesque descriptions are to be found in the poems of each. 'Ruth' is saturated with Bartram."<sup>10</sup> The reviewer then points to the fourth, ninth and tenth stanzas in "Ruth."<sup>11</sup>

Subsequent scholarship, however, has discovered a much greater indebtedness to the *Travels* than merely these three stanzas. "Ruth" is indeed "saturated with Bartram." Not only its images and diction are, to a large extent, derived from Bartram, but some of its philosophical implications regarding nature generally are colored by the Philadelphia Quaker's ideas. Beginning, then, with the fourth stanza, the influence of Bartram on "Ruth" can be traced with a measure of certainty. The "youth from Georgia's shore" wears a "military casque . . . With splendid feathers drest," a headgear worn by "Micco Chlucco the Long Warrior, or King of the Siminoles," whose portrait is the frontispiece of the *Travels*. This headgear is further described by Bartram in another place: "A very curious diadem or band, about four inches broad, and ingeniously wrought or woven, and curiously decorated . . . encircles their temples, the front peak of which is embellished with a high waving plume, of crane or heron feathers" (pp. 501-2). These are the same feathers that nod in the breeze and make "a gallant crest" in Wordsworth's poem. The youth himself, although Wordsworth tells us that he was not of Indian blood, that he "spake the English tongue, And bore a soldier's name" (stanza v), is undoubtedly modeled upon Bartram's "young Orpheus":

The young mustee, who came with me to the Mucclases from Mobile, having Chactaw blood in his veins from his mother, was a sensible young fellow, and by his father had been instructed in reading, writing and arithmetic, and could speak English very well. He took it into his head, to travel into the Chactaw country: his views were magnanimous, and his designs in the highest degree commendable, nothing less than to inform himself of every species of arts and sciences, that might be

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 219.

<sup>11</sup> Professor Dowden later rectified his oversight by adding a note to the poem in his selected edition of *Poems by William Wordsworth*. Boston, 1897, pp. 378-79.



of use and advantage, when introduced into his own country, but more particularly music and poetry: with these views he privately left the Nation, went to Mobile, and there entered into the service of the trading company to the Chactaws, as a white man; his easy, communicative, active and familiar disposition and manners, being agreeable to that people, procured him access every where, and favored his subtilty and artifice.<sup>12</sup>

It is this youth,

With hues of genius on his cheek  
In finest tones . . . could speak (stanza vi),

who

Among the Indians . . . had fought,  
And with him many tales he brought  
Of pleasure and of fear;  
Such tales as told to any maid  
By such a Youth, in the green shade  
Were perilous to hear (stanza viii).

The tales that Wordsworth's "youth from Georgia's shore" tells Ruth do prove "perilous" to hear. Bartram's young mustee, too, pressed "to give out some of his new songs," complied with such success that "a young Chactaw slave girl in the circle . . . soon . . . discovered very affecting sensations of affliction and distress of mind" (p. 507). The girl, like Ruth, is an orphan. The general effect of the "doleful moral songs or elegies" of the Indians, says Bartram, is "quick and sensible . . . on their passions . . . ; a stranger is for a moment lost to himself as it were, or his mind, associated with the person immediately affected, is in danger of revealing his own distress unawares" (p. 508). The story of "Ruth" may, of course, have been suggested to Wordsworth, as he said, "by an account I had of a wanderer in Somersetshire";<sup>13</sup> it may have been founded on fact, as De Quincey declared: "Wordsworth himself told me, in general terms, that the case which suggested the poem was that of an American lady, whose husband forsook her at the very place of embarkation from England; under circumstances and under expectations, upon her part, very much

<sup>12</sup> P. 506. Quoted by Prof. Lane Cooper in *The Athenaeum*, April 22, 1905, p. 499.

<sup>13</sup> Fenwick note, *Poems*, II, 104.

the same as those of Ruth";<sup>14</sup> but the "hero" of the poem is Bartram's young half-breed.

The imagery in the youth's tales frequently follows Bartram almost word for word. In stanza ix the youth tells of girls

Who quit their fold with dance and shout,  
Their pleasant Indian town,  
To gather strawberries all day long;  
Returning with a choral song  
When daylight is gone down.

Bartram records that, "towards evening, a company of Indian girls, inhabitants of a village in the hills at a small distance, called, having baskets of strawberries."<sup>15</sup> Eighteen pages later he describes "a most enchanting view, a vast expanse of green meadows and strawberry fields" where "companies of young, innocent Cherokee"<sup>16</sup> virgins, some busily gathering the rich fragrant fruit, others having already filled their baskets, lay reclined under the shade of floriferous and fragrant native bowers of Magnolia . . . disclosing their beauties to the fluttering breeze . . . whilst other parties . . . were yet collecting strawberries or wantonly chasing their companions, tantalizing them, staining their lips and cheeks with the rich fruit" (pp. 356-57). Nor is "the choral song" hard to find in Bartram. Exactly two paragraphs before his description of the young mustee appears a description of Indian dances, at which "the girls clap hands, and raise their shrill sweet voices, . . . and perform an interlude or chorus separately" (pp. 505-506).

The youth continues to speak

of plants that hourly change  
 Their blossoms, through a boundless range  
 Of intermingling hues;  
 With budding, fading, faded flowers  
 They stand the wonder of the bowers  
 From morn to evening dews (stanza x).

<sup>14</sup> *Descriptive Sketches*, II, 305, ed. 1854. Quoted by Dowden in *Poems by William Wordsworth*, p. 379.

<sup>15</sup> P. 349. This passage in Bartram has evidently thus far escaped the vigilance of commentators.

<sup>16</sup> It will be recalled that Wordsworth's youth brought his "splendid feathers" from the "Cherokees" (stanza iv).

Here we recognize Bartram's *Gordonia lasianthus*, which in Coleridge's notebook got mixed with "the never bloomless furze." Of this plant Bartram writes:

Its thick foliage, of a dark green colour, is flowered over with large milk-white fragrant *blossoms*, on long slender elastic peduncles, at the extremities of its numerous branches, from the bosom of the leaves, and renewed every morning. . . . It at the same time continually pushes forth new twigs, with young buds on them; and in the winter and spring the third year's leaves, now partly concealed by the new and perfect ones, are *gradually changing colour*, from green to golden yellow, from that to a scarlet, from scarlet to crimson. . . . So that the *Gordonia lasianthus* may be said to change and renew its garments every morning . . . throughout the year; and every day appears with *unfading lustre* (pp. 161-162).

In the next stanza the youth

told of the magnolia, spread  
High as a cloud, high over head!  
The cypress and her spire;  
—Of flowers that with one scarlet gleam  
Cover a hundred leagues, and seem  
To set the hills on fire (stanza xi).

Wordsworth himself explained in a footnote that by the "magnolia" he meant the "magnolia grandiflora."<sup>17</sup> Of course, Bartram refers to this tree in numerous other places, and it is more plausible to assume that Wordsworth had in mind more descriptive references than the one pointed out by Professor Knight; such, for example, as these: "The Laurel Magnolias, which grow on this river, are the most beautiful and tall I have anywhere seen. . . . Their usual height is about one hundred feet, and some greatly exceed that" (pp. 85-86). "The towering Magnolia, itself a grove" (p. 160). Here is the source not only of Wordsworth's "magnolia" but of "spread High as a cloud, high over head!" The next line: "The cypress and her spire," enables us to discover an even closer indebtedness. Professor Knight traces Wordsworth's cypress to Bartram's

<sup>17</sup> Prof. Knight added to this footnote a reference to Bartram, p. 8. The page reference is probably a misprint, for in both the original Philadelphia edition and the London reprint, Bartram's reference to "the great Laurel Tree (*Magnolia grandiflora*)" appears on page 6.

The *Cypressus disticha* stands in the first order of North American trees. Its majestic stature, lifting its cumbrous top towards the skies, and casting a wide shade upon the ground, as a dark intervening cloud, etc.<sup>18</sup>

It is evident that "the cumbrous top" of the cypress has become her "spire," and it is possible that the "dark intervening cloud" suggested the image about the magnolia "spread High as a cloud." For the last three lines of this stanza Wordsworth's own acknowledgement of an indebtedness to Bartram has already been quoted. He, however, merely referred in a general way to the "scarlet flowers . . . mentioned by Bartram." Professor Knight added a note from Mr. Ernest Coleridge identifying Bartram as "the source from which Wordsworth derived his description of Georgian scenery in *Ruth*" (*Poems*, II, p. 108). It remained for Professor Lane Cooper to identify the

flowers that with one scarlet gleam  
Cover a hundred leagues, and seem  
To set the hills on fire

with Bartram's "fiery Azalea."

The epithet fiery, I annex to this most celebrated species of Azalea, as being expressive of the appearance of it in flower, which are in general of the colour of the finest red lead, orange and bright gold, . . . the clusters of the blossoms cover the shrubs in such incredible profusion on the hill sides, that suddenly opening to view from dark shades, we are alarmed with the apprehension of *the hills being set on fire*.<sup>19</sup>

In the next two stanzas

The Youth of green savannahs spake,  
And many an endless, endless lake,  
With all its fairy crowds  
Of islands, that together lie  
As quietly as spots of sky  
Among the evening clouds.

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<sup>18</sup> *Poems*, II, 107. The quotation is from page 90 of the *Travels*. Bartram uses the word "Cupressus" instead of "Cypressus"; Prof. Knight does not indicate that he has omitted part of the passage.

<sup>19</sup> *Travels*, p. 323. Quoted by Lane Cooper in *Athenaeum*, April 22, 1905, p. 499.



"How pleasant," then he said, "it were  
 A fisher or a hunter there,  
 In sunshine or in shade  
 To wander with an easy mind;  
 And build a household fire, and find  
 A home in every glade!

Professor Knight refers to a passage in Bartram which is the source of Wordsworth's "green savannahs," "endless lake" and "crowds of islands":

North and south almost endless green plains and meadows, embellished with islets and projecting promontories of high dark forests, where the pyramidal *Magnolia grandiflora* . . . conspicuously towers.<sup>20</sup>

But, as Professor Lowes has remarked, "the savannahs and the lakes of stanza 12 are everywhere" in Bartram,<sup>21</sup> and, furthermore, both of these stanzas were "unmistakably suggested" by Bartram.<sup>22</sup> For Wordsworth's youth, life as a fisher or a hunter wandering "with an easy mind" in Bartram's far-off country is as much of an ideal as for Coleridge's youth in *Osorio* who sang a "doleful song about green fields" and visualized "How sweet it were on lake or wild savannah to hunt for food . . . And wander up and down at Liberty."

The enticing pictures that the youth goes on to paint to Ruth include her being his "helpmate in the woods" and her running,

A sylvan huntress at my side,  
 And drive the flying deer! (stanza xvi)

The source of these lines is not included in Prof. Knight's notes, nor has any other scholar suggested it, yet Bartram's descriptions of deer-hunting are so memorable that they could hardly have failed to flash upon Wordsworth's mind as he wrote this poem—so permeated with Bartram—and thought of what Ruth's life might be in the strange land of which he had read in Bartram. There is the hunting scene in the Alachua savanna,

a level, green plain . . . encircled with high, sloping hills, covered with waving forests and fragrant Orange groves. . . . The towering *Magnolia grandiflora* and transcendent Palm, stand conspicuous amongst them. . . . Herds of sprightly deer . . . appearing happy and contented

<sup>20</sup> *Travels*, p. 141; *Poems*, II, 108.    <sup>21</sup> *Xanadu*, p. 455.    <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 513.

in the enjoyment of peace, till disturbed and affrighted by the warrior man. Behold yonder, coming upon them through the darkened groves . . . the naked red warrior, invading the Elysian fields and green plains of Alachua. . . . Suddenly they [the deer] speed off with their young in the centre; but the roebuck fears him not . . . he bounds off, and in a few minutes distances his foe a mile . . . (pp. 187-88).

Several pages later there is another deer-hunting scene, in which "the princely buck, who headed the party," is killed, but "his affrighted followers at the instant, sprang off in every direction, streaming away like meteors or phantoms," and saved themselves (pp. 200-201). No wonder Wordsworth was convinced that Ruth would be won over by the youth's tales and

agree  
With him to sail across the sea,  
And drive the flying deer (stanza xvii).

For her vision was upon "those lonesome floods, And green savannahs" and "the wild woods" (stanza xix).

But a youth who had spent his past in roaming about "through savage lands . . . with vagrant bands of Indians in the West . . ." (stanza xx) was not to be trusted. The fact is that Wordsworth, unlike poor Ruth, distrusted the "Youth from Georgia's shore" from the very beginning. On this point Professor Cooper calls attention to "Wordsworth's ill-concealed dissatisfaction with a too languid or 'too gaudy region' . . . Properly interpreted," he says, the stanza

He told of the Magnolia spread  
High as a cloud, high overhead!  
The cypress and her spire;  
—Of flowers that with one scarlet gleam  
Cover a hundred leagues, and seem  
To set the hills on fire

"discloses the sensuous vision of a character condemned by the poet—of the panther-like youth who has accepted a dangerous education from nature." <sup>28</sup> The contention is convincing, especially in view of stanzas xxi, xxii, and xxiii:

<sup>28</sup> *The Athenaeum*, April 22, 1905, p. 499. The phrase "a too gaudy region" is Wordsworth's own—*Prelude*, III, 446.

The wind, the tempest roaring high,  
 The tumult of a tropic sky,  
 Might well be dangerous food  
 For him, a Youth to whom was given  
 So much of earth—so much of heaven,  
 And such impetuous blood.  
 Whatever in those climes he found  
 Irregular in sight or sound  
 Did to his mind impart  
 A kindred impulse, seemed allied  
 To his own powers, and justified  
 The workings of his heart.  
 Nor less, to feed voluptuous thought,  
 The beauteous forms of nature wrought,  
 Fair trees and gorgeous flowers;  
 The breezes their own languor lent;  
 The stars had feelings, which they sent  
 Into those favored bowers.

Professor Cooper goes so far as to "fancy that there is an implied censure of Bartram himself in some of the youth's attributes, since for all his scientific interests, this naturalist shows an undeniable predilection for

Whatever in those climes he found  
 Irregular in sight or sound."

Yet the censure could not have been a severe one, for in the next stanza Wordsworth admits that in the youth's

worst pursuit I ween  
 That sometimes there did intervene  
 Pure hopes of high intent:  
 For passions linked to forms so fair  
 And stately, needs must have their share  
 Of noble sentiment (stanza xxiv).

It has been said that Wordsworth's debt to Bartram is not confined exclusively to scenery and diction. There are other and more subtle influences which he owes to the *Travels*. Even when the American youth apparently speaks of England,

"Before me shone a glorious world—  
 Fresh as a banner bright, unfurled  
 To music suddenly:

I looked upon those hills and plains,  
 And seemed as if let loose from chains,  
 To live at liberty" (stanza xxix),

he, along with Wordsworth, is still thinking of Bartram's country. The compliment which Professor Lowes pays to Wordsworth for these lines is at the same time a compliment to the Philadelphia botanist: "Nobody ever put the romance of discovery more magnificently into words than Wordsworth, in a poem shot through with reminiscences of William Bartram's glowing delineations of strange beauty."<sup>24</sup> The spirit of Bartram, no less than his diction and imagery, permeates this poem. And, in spite of Wordsworth's implied disapproval of Bartram's predilection for the "irregular" in "a too gaudy region," not a little of the Quaker traveler's philosophy creeps into the poem. To Professor Cooper the lines,

The engines of her pain, the tools  
 That shaped her sorrow, rocks and pools,  
 And airs that gently stir  
 The vernal leaves— (stanza xxxix)

"betray a philosophy not wholly foreign to Bartram's notion of an immanent spirit penetrating all the individual mechanisms of nature."<sup>25</sup> The fact that this philosophy is also reflected, in more convincing forms, in other poems by Wordsworth, supports this view.

But Wordsworth's philosophical colorings from Bartram will have to wait a while. It has been shown that the scenery and imagery of Bartram are everywhere in "Ruth"; so are they in many other of Wordsworth's poems. It can be said of Wordsworth, even with greater accuracy than of Coleridge, that he had a tenacious memory. *The Prelude* is proof enough. Impressions of childhood, of people met, of books read, of remarks overheard—all was retained and came out of the imaginative repository when the creative need urged. Professor Cooper has pointed out an instance where an impression from Bartram seems to have lain dormant in the poet's mind for something like five years, awaiting utilization. "It had become," he com-

<sup>24</sup> *Xanadu*, p. 314.

<sup>25</sup> *Athenaeum*, April 22, 1905, p. 500.





Wordsworth had read many travel books picturing unpopulated American regions, and it is not wise to be definite as to which was the source of a particular passage in such an ambitious poem as *The Excursion*. It is more certain that frequently they all united in his mind to form a composite impression of America, so that it is not at all strange to find the Mississippi and the St. Lawrence ("that northern stream That spreads into successive seas") merged in the same passage. However, that a good deal of Bartram has crept into these lines is a not unreasonable hypothesis. Bartram's road to the Mississippi is "under the shadow of a grand forest" (p. 427). He stands on the banks of the river "fascinated" by its "magnificence," surveying "the flood, the trees, high forests," and all "objects," which, he tells us, "all unite . . . in exhibiting a prospect of the grand sublime" (pp. 427-28). It is clear that Bartram saw not only with his eyes but also "With mind that sheds a light on what he sees."<sup>27</sup>

But the parallelism is even more striking and the hypothesis that Wordsworth remembered his Bartram when he wrote this passage is even more justifiable. Bartram's famous Altamaha piece contains a paragraph which Wordsworth could not have overlooked:

Thus secure and tranquil, and meditating on the marvellous scene of *primitive nature, as yet unmodified by the hand of man*, I gently descended the peaceful stream, *on whose polished surface were depicted the mutable shadows from its pensile banks* (p. 49).

It will be recalled that, in "Ruth," Wordsworth used the "Tamaha," and it is certain that Bartram's "solitary wood-pelican, perched upon the utmost elevated spire" of "yon . . .

<sup>27</sup> Compare also with a passage in an early draft of Book VIII of *The Prelude*. In MS. Y Wordsworth writes:

Or like an Indian, when, in solitude  
And individual glory, he looks out  
From some high eminence upon a tr(ack)  
Boundless of unappropriated earth (208-211).

For an explanation of MS. Y see De Selincourt's edition of *The Prelude*, p. xxiv; the lines quoted are from p. 558 of the same volume.

defoliated Cypress tree" (p. 49), was transplanted into *The Prelude*:

the pelican  
Upon the cypress spire in lonely thought (III, 442-43).

Surely Wordsworth read the next paragraph and noted the "marvellous scenes of primitive nature . . . unmodified by the hand of man" and the water that "depicted." In his mind, Bartram himself amid these surroundings leading "an unshackled life" could not have been separable from these images. The tribute to the sun at the end of the passage may have come from Bartram's very next sentence: "The glorious sovereign of day, clothed in light refulgent, rolling in his gilded chariot . . ." (p. 49).

All this, however, does not exclude the possibility of echoes from other sources. The next six lines afford an illustration:

So, westward, tow'rd the unviolated woods  
I bent my way; and, roaming far and wide,  
Failed not to greet the merry Mocking-bird;  
And, while the melancholy Muccawiss  
(The sportive bird's companion in the grove)  
Repeated, O'er and o'er, his plaintive cry (III, 944-49).

Professor Knight prints convincing evidence to prove that the "merry mocking-bird" may have come out of Ashe and that the "Muccawiss" is another name for the whip-poor-will and almost definitely came out of Carver.<sup>28</sup>

Nevertheless, having in mind this possibility of other sources complicating our study, one is struck by another passage in *The Excursion* which invites a reperusal of Bartram.

Here closed the Sage that eloquent harangue,  
Poured forth with fervour in continuous stream,  
Such as, remote, 'mid savage wilderness,  
An Indian Chief discharges from his breast  
Into the hearing of assembled tribes,  
In open circle seated round . . . (IV, 1275-80).

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<sup>28</sup> *Poems*, V, 141-142; 393-396. The books referred to are *Travels in America* by Thomas Ashe, London, 1808, and *Travels in North America* by Jonathan Carver, London, 1778.

There are at least two places in the *Travels* which could have suggested this picture of the Sage "whom time and nature had made wise" (1287) delivering an "eloquent harangue" like an Indian chief before the "assembled tribes, In open circle round." Bartram narrates:

. . . we took our *seats in a circle* of venerable men, *round* a fire in the centre of the area. . . . I was struck with awe and veneration at the appearance of a very aged man . . . the whole circle saluted him . . . (p. 499).

And again:

The people being *assembled* and *seated* in order, . . . the ball opens, first with a long *harangue* . . . spoken by an *aged chief*. . . . This oration was delivered with great spirit and *eloquence* . . . (p. 369).

The coalescing of images in a poet's mind is so natural as to need no discussion. Here not only two Indian assemblies become one and Wordsworth's Wanderer assumes, for a moment, the lineaments of Bartram's aged chief, but England itself for the moment merges into the remote wilderness which flashes up in Wordsworth's mind.

The phenomenon happens again in *The Prelude*. The poet, writing of the time

when rock and hill,  
The woods, and distant Skiddaw's lofty height,  
Were bronzed with deepest radiance,

and he "stood alone Beneath the sky," suddenly sees himself

as if I had been born  
On Indian plains, and from my mother's hut  
Had run abroad in wantonness, to sport  
A naked savage, in the thunder shower (I, 294-300).

The diction here is much too general to be traced to Bartram or to any other particular source. Yet it is easy to see that Bartram must have contributed his share in fixing within Wordsworth's mind the image of "Indian plains," which are only the "green savannahs" of "Ruth." That Bartram did come to his mind during the composition of *The Prelude* is evident from other passages in this most ambitious of Wordsworth's poems. We



have seen that the pelican, which first appears in *The Borderers*, reappears in *The Prelude* in a context which points definitely to Bartram as its source. The passage deserves attention for more than its borrowing of an exotic bird from Bartram. Here Wordsworth, displeased with the Cambridge of his time, imagines the surroundings of a contrasting seat of learning:

Oh, what joy  
To see a sanctuary for our country's youth  
Informed with such a spirit as might be  
Its own protection; a primeval grove,  
Where, though the shades of cheerfulness were filled,  
Nor indigent of songs warbled from crowds  
In under-coverts, yet the countenance  
Of the whole place should bear a stamp of awe;  
A habitation sober and demure  
For ruminating creatures; a domain  
For quiet things to wander in; a haunt  
In which the heron should delight to feed  
By the shy rivers, and the pelican  
Upon the cypress spire in lonely thought  
Might sit and sun himself (III, 430-444).

"The whole passage," remarks Professor Cooper,"—ruminating creatures, pelican, cypress spire, and all—is a remarkable adaptation of a scene depicted by the Quaker botanist, William Bartram, on the banks of the Altamaha, in Georgia."<sup>29</sup>

The scene to which Professor Cooper refers is, of course, the same Altamaha piece which has been discussed in connection with *The Excursion* and from which a paragraph has been quoted. Other portions are:

I ascended this beautiful river, on whose fruitful banks the generous and true sons of liberty securely dwell, fifty miles above the white settlements. . . . My progress was rendered delightful by the sylvan elegance of the groves, chearful meadows, and high distant forests, which in grand order presented themselves to view. The winding banks of the river, and the high projecting promontories, unfolded fresh scenes of grandeur and sublimity. The deep forests and distant hills re-echoed the chearing social lowings of domestic herds. The air was filled with the loud and shrill whooping of the wary sharp-sighted crane. Behold, on yon decayed, defoliated Cypress tree, the solitary

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<sup>29</sup> *Modern Language Notes*, XXII, 112.

wood-pelican, dejectedly perched upon its utmost elevated spire; he there, like an ancient venerable sage, sets himself up as a mark of derision, for the safety of his kindred tribes (pp. 48-49).

As regards the pelican, Bartram, in another place, has a more detailed description of this bird which may have helped to strengthen Wordsworth's image. After describing the size, shape, color, and feeding habits of the bird, Bartram continues:

This solitary bird does not associate in flocks, but is generally seen alone; . . . he stands alone on the topmost limb of tall dead Cypress trees, his neck contracted or drawn in upon his shoulders, and beak resting like a long scythe upon his breast: in this pensive posture and solitary situation, they look extremely grave, sorrowful and melancholy, as if in the deepest thought (p. 150).

And as regards Wordsworth's "warbled from crowds In under-coverts," Professor Cooper quotes<sup>80</sup> Bartram's

At the cool eve's approach, the sweet enchanting melody of the feathered songsters gradually ceases, and they betake themselves to their leafy coverts for security and repose (pp. 81-82),

and calls attention to pp. 105-106 ("The squadrons of aquatic fowls, . . . hastening to their leafy coverts . . . I was lulled asleep by the mixed sounds of the wearied surf . . . and the tender warblings of the . . . winged inhabitants of the groves"). Another passage Professor Cooper quotes is the one about the small birds appearing suddenly in Pennsylvania, in the spring; this has already been quoted in connection with Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner."

Again Professor Cooper detects in Wordsworth a dissatisfaction with Bartram's "excessive richness of sub-tropical life and colour."<sup>81</sup> He points out that Wordsworth in adapting the Altamaha piece omitted all the scented blossoms and "incense-bearing" trees with which Bartram's landscape is adorned, and that when he turns from the ideal back to the existing university his method of disparagement implies a disapproval of Bartram's landscape as well:

In vain for such solemnity I looked;  
Mine eyes were crossed by butterflies, ears vexed

<sup>80</sup> *Athenaeum*, April 22, 1905, p. 499.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

By chattering popinjays; the inner heart  
Seemed trivial, and the impresses without  
Of a too gaudy region (III, 445-449).

Butterflies and popinjays are to be found in Bartram in several places. Furthermore, Wordsworth's self-criticism is couched in images derived from Bartram. Thus he recalls the time when

The memory languidly revolved, the heart  
Reposed in noontide rest, the inner pulse  
Of contemplation almost failed to beat.  
Such life might not inaptly be compared  
To a floating island, an amphibious spot  
Unsound, of spongy texture, yet withal  
Not wanting a fair face of water weeds  
And pleasant flowers. (III, 332-339)

The self-criticism, as Professor Herford points out, is even stronger in the earlier text:

Rotted as by a charm, my life became  
A floating island, an amphibious thing, etc.<sup>32</sup>

The image of a "floating island" is undoubtedly derived from Wordsworth's observation of the lakes. In his *Guide* he writes:

There occasionally appears above the surface of Derwentwater, and always in the same place, a considerable tract of spongy ground covered with aquatic plants, which is called the Floating, but with more propriety might be named the Buoyant, Island; and, on one of the pools near the lake of Esthwaite, may sometimes be seen a mossy Islet, with trees upon it, shifting about before the wind, a *lusus naturae* frequent on the great rivers of America. . . .<sup>33</sup>

But it will be noted, in the last line, that a reminiscence from Bartram has floated into Wordsworth's mind and combined with his own observation. The *lusus naturae* on the rivers of America is Bartram's *Pistia stratiotes* which "associates in large communities, or floating islands" (p. 88). The image came back to him once again in *The Excursion*: ". . . the little float-

<sup>32</sup> Ll. 339-40, 1805-6 (De Selincourt). See C. H. Herford, *Wordsworth*. London, 1930, p. 24.

<sup>33</sup> *Guide to the Lakes*, Fifth Edition (De Selincourt), p. 38. In this connection also see Dorothy Wordsworth's poem "Floating Island" (*Poems*, VIII, 125).

ing isles . . . beautiful . . . by Nature charged With the same pensive office" (III, 979-80). The "spongy texture, yet withal Not wanting a fair face of water weeds And pleasant flowers" in *The Prelude* and "the considerable tract of spongy ground covered with aquatic plants . . . a mossy Islet . . . shifting about before the wind" invite another quotation from Bartram:

a very singular aquatic plant . . . communities, or floating islands . . . a quarter of a mile in extent . . . impelled to and fro as the wind and current may direct. . . . In great storms of wind and rain . . . large masses of these floating plains are broken loose, and driven from the shores, into the wide water, where they have the appearance of islets . . . in order to enliven the delusion and form a most picturesque appearance, we see not only flowery plants . . . old weather-beaten trees . . . with the long moss waving from their snags . . . (88-89).

The "fair face of water weeds" in line 338 recalls Bartram's "in short, these dark, loathsome waters . . . seem to be a . . . tincture of the leaves of trees, herbs and reeds, arising from the shores, and which almost overspread them, and float on the surface, insomuch that a great part of these stagnate rivers, during the summer and autumnal seasons, are constrained to pass under a load of grass and weeds" (p. 426).

The word "pulse" in the phrase, "the inner pulse of contemplation" (II, 333), Professor Cooper points out, "is common to both Bartram and Wordsworth,"<sup>34</sup> and Dowden has annotated the line "The very pulse of the machine" in Wordsworth's "She Was a Phantom of Delight" with a reference to Bartram. "It may be worth noting," says Dowden, "that a like collocation occurs in Bartram: 'At the return of the morning, by the powerful influence of light, the pulse of nature becomes more active, and the universal vibration of life insensibly and irresistibly moves the wondrous machine.'" <sup>35</sup>

The phrase "Reposed in noontide rest" (*Prelude*, III, 332-33) reminds Professor Cooper<sup>36</sup> of a similar self-criticism con-

<sup>34</sup> *Athenaeum*, April 22, 1905, p. 499.

<sup>35</sup> Edward Dowden, "Notes on Wordsworth," *The Athenaeum*, February 24, 1894, p. 246; *Poems by William Wordsworth*. Boston (Athenaeum Press), 1897, p. 435. The quotation from the *Travels* is from p. 179.

<sup>36</sup> *Athenaeum*, April 22, 1905, p. 499.



tained in Wordsworth's "Stanzas written in my Pocket-Copy of Thomson's 'Castle of Indolence'":

Retired in that sunshiny shade he lay;  
And, like a naked Indian, slept himself away (26-27).

These lines suggest to Professor Cooper a passage in Bartram:

How happily situated is this retired spot of earth! What an elisium it is! where the wandering Siminole, the naked red warrior, roams at large, and after the vigorous chase retires from the scorching heat of the meridian sun. Here he reclines, and reposes under the odoriferous shades of Zanthoxilon, whilst the balmy zephyrs fan him to sleep (p. 107).

A similar scene is described in another place, with Bartram himself as the subject. "And now being weary and drowsy," he writes, "I was induced to indulge and listen to the dictates of reason and invitations to repose, which consenting to, after securing my boat and reconnoitering the ground, I spread my blanket under the Oaks near my boat, on which I extended myself, where, falling to sleep, I instantaneously passed away the sultry hours of noon, what a blissful tranquil repose!" (p. 137).

There can be no doubt that the numerous similarities in diction and collocations in Wordsworth and Bartram are more than mere coincidences. In poems such as "Ruth" and in some instances in *The Excursion* and *The Prelude* the parallelisms prove an actual indebtedness, and though this cannot be claimed as definitely in all instances, the similarities are striking enough to merit attention. Besides diction and imagery Wordsworth borrowed from the reading of travel literature a coloring which often creeps into even his most English of poems. The word "Indian," for example, is used in one form or another no less than thirty times.<sup>37</sup> We have already noticed the Indian chief in *The Excursion* (IV, 1278), the Indian plains in *The Prelude* (I, 298) and the naked Indian in "Stanzas written in my Pocket-Copy of Thomson's 'Castle of Indolence.'" <sup>38</sup> Other illustrations of the use he makes of this image in *The Prelude* may be cited:

<sup>37</sup> See *A Concordance to the Poems of William Wordsworth*, edited by Lane Cooper. London, 1911.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. "The naked Indian of the wild" ("Presentiments," 34).

With Indian awe and wonder (VI, 121)  
     Sown like tents  
 Or Indian cabins . . . (VI, 521-22)  
     from remote  
 America, the Hunter-Indian . . . (VII, 225-26)  
     . . . painted Indians (VII, 707)  
 Think, how the everlasting streams and woods,  
 Stretched and still stretching far and wide, exalt  
 The roving Indian, on his desert sands: (VII, 745-47)  
 Induced by sleeping nightly on the ground  
 Within his sod-built cabin, Indian wise (VIII, 439-40)

Mention has been made of Wordsworth's use of Bartram's pelican and warbling "crowds in under-coverts"—and, incidentally, of Ashe's mocking-bird and Carver's whippoorwill. In *The Recluse* appears a description of the flight of waterfowl, a passage of twenty-seven lines which were first published under the title "Water-Fowl" in 1827 and were reprinted in the fifth edition of the *Guide through the District of the Lakes*:<sup>39</sup>

    Behold, how with a grace  
 Of ceaseless motion, that might scarcely seem  
 Inferior to angelical, they prolong  
 Their curious pastime, *shaping in mid air,*  
 And sometimes with ambitious wing that soars  
*High* as the level of the mountain tops,  
*A circuit* ampler than *the lake* beneath,  
*Their own domain*;—but ever, while intent  
 On *tracing and retracing* that large round,  
 Their jubilant activity evolves  
 Hundreds of curves and *circlets, to and fro,*  
 Upwards and downwards, progress intricate  
 Yet unperplexed, *as if one spirit swayed*  
*Their indefatigable flight.* 'Tis done—  
 Ten times and more, I fancied it had ceased;  
 But lo! the *vanished company* again  
*Ascending,* they approach—I hear their *wings*  
 Faint, faint at first; and then *an eager sound*  
 Passed in a moment—and *as faint again!*  
*They tempt the sun to sport among their plumes;*  
 Tempt the smooth water, or the *gleaming ice,*  
 To show them a fair image; 'tis themselves,  
 Their own fair forms, upon the glimmering *plain,*

<sup>39</sup> *Poems*, VIII, 243.

Painted more soft and fair as they *descend*  
 Almost to touch;—then up again *aloft*,  
 Up with a sally, and a flash of speed,  
 As if they scorned both resting-place and rest!  
 (*Recluse*, I, 203-229)

"If," says Professor Cooper, "it is connected with something similar in Bartram, [this passage] well exemplifies the poet's complete mastery in adapting an artistic source."<sup>40</sup> Such a connection is not implausible; the passage which Professor Cooper cites and the other passages to which he refers provide interesting parallels in diction and in general atmosphere with Wordsworth's lines. For purposes of comparison striking similarities in both authors have been italicized, and for the same reason the quotation from Wordsworth needs to be enlarged by including the six lines immediately preceding those already quoted. They are:

. . . like them  
 I cannot *take possession of the sky*,  
*Mount* with a thoughtless impulse, and *wheel* there,  
 One of a mighty multitude, whose way  
 Is a perpetual harmony, and dance  
 Magnificent.

Now Bartram, as has been shown, was fascinated by the flight of birds and his pages contain many descriptions that Wordsworth may have remembered:

Behold the loud, sonorous, watchful savanna crane . . . with musical clangor, in detached squadrons. They spread their light elastic sail; at first they move from the earth heavy and slow, they labour and beat the dense *air: they form the line with wide extended wings . . . they all rise and fall together as one bird*; now they *mount aloft*, gradually *wheeling* about, each squadron performs its *evolution*, incircling the expansive *plain, observing each one their own orbit*; then lowering sail, *descend* on the verge of some glittering lake, whilst other squadrons, *ascending aloft in spiral circles . . . wheel round* and double the promontory, in the silvery *regions of the clouded skies*, where, *far from the scope of the eye*, they carefully observe the verdant meadows on the borders of the East Lake; then contract *their plumes* and *descend* to earth . . . (p. 146-147).

<sup>40</sup> *Athenaeum*, April 22, 1905, p. 499.

Coleridge, we have seen, remembered this passage, and its general similarity to Wordsworth's lines is striking. But other quotations amplify this similarity. For instance:

It is a pleasing sight at times of high winds and heavy thunder, to observe the numerous squadrons of these Spanish curlews driving *to and fro, turning and tacking about, high up in the air*, when by their various *evolutions* in the different and opposite currents of the wind . . . their *plumage gleams and sparkles . . . reflecting the sunbeams . . .* (p. 149).

This is the paragraph *just preceding the one from which Wordsworth drew his wood-pelican sitting on his cypress spire*. But still another passage, again about the savanna crane, may have contributed to the picture in Wordsworth's mind:

The sonorous savanna crane, in well disciplined squadrons, now rising from the earth, *mount aloft in spiral circles, far above the dense atmosphere of the humid plain*; they again view the glorious sun, and the light of day still *gleaming on their polished feathers, they sing their hymn*, then in a strait line majestically *descend*, and alight on the towering Palms or lofty Pines, their secure and peaceful lodging places . . . (p. 190).

Furthermore, it is to be noted that in the *Guide to the Lakes* these twenty-seven lines appear on page 37, one page before the description of the floating islands—"a *lusus naturae* frequent on the great rivers of America"—which has already been discussed.

The resemblances of Coleridge's owls to Bartram's have been noted. In Wordsworth, too, owls hoot. His boy of Winander

Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls,  
That they might answer him; and they would shout  
Across the watery vale, and shout again,  
Responsive to his call, with quivering peals,  
And long halloos and screams, and echoes loud,  
Redoubled and redoubled . . . (*Prelude*, V, 373-78)

"Is it pure coincidence," asks Professor Cooper, "that Bartram employs similar diction for the same bird?"—

I was awakened and greatly surprised by the terrifying screams of Owls . . . screaming and shouting, which increased and spread every



way for miles around, in dreadful peals vibrating through the dark extensive forests, meadows and lakes."—P. 135.<sup>41</sup>

The query becomes even more pertinent when it is remembered that Wordsworth's lines were written in Germany in 1799,<sup>42</sup> where Wordsworth wrote "Ruth," a poem "saturated with Bartram." One is tempted to add the owls in *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, especially because of the atmospheric context in which they are usually placed, to the query of coincidence. In I, xxii Wordsworth dreams of a hermitage:

—to some dry nook  
Scooped out of living rock, and near a brook  
Hurled down a mountain-cove from stage to stage,  
Yet tempering, for my sight, its bustling rage  
In the soft heaven of a translucent pool;  
Thence creeping under sylvan arches cool,  
Fit haunt of shapes whose glorious equipage  
Would elevate my dreams . . .  
Crisp, yellow leaves my bed; the hooting owl  
My night-watch . . .

This may be a place in the Lake country, but its coloring is strongly reminiscent of Bartram's region. One again sees Bartram asleep in his retreat by the river while the owls scream (p. 135). In sonnet II, xxi Wordsworth writes of "The owl of evening and the woodland fox," a collocation reminiscent of Bartram's owl whooping to the wolves below. Another owl appears in "A Morning Exercise," this time not far from "naked Indians":

and when the owl  
Tries his two voices for a favourite strain—  
*Tu-whit—Tu-whoo!* the unsuspecting fowl  
Forebodes mishap or seems but to complain;  
. . . . .  
Through border wilds where naked Indians stray,  
Myriads of notes attest her subtle skill;  
A feathered task-master cries, "Work away!"  
And, in thy iteration, "WHIP POOR WILL!" . . .  
(Ll. 7-16)

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 500.

<sup>42</sup> *Poems*, II, 57.

There can be no question that both the owl and the whippoorwill, as well as the naked Indians, came out of a book of travels. Wordsworth himself appended a note next to the whippoorwill: "See Waterton's *Wanderings in South America*,"<sup>43</sup> but we have already noted the whippoorwill in a much earlier poem and supposedly coming out of Carver's *Travels*.

Wordsworth's indebtedness to Bartram is certain in cases where his adaptation has not obscured the source. It is less susceptible to proof in other cases, but it is reasonable to assume that even there such an indebtedness exists. A book which left such vivid impressions that they crept, sometimes bodily, into such personal poems as *The Prelude*, *The Recluse*, and *The Excursion* could not help coloring much of his other work. Even if the coloring is a composite one, Bartram contributed his share. When Wordsworth writes:

—Ye have seen  
The Indian's bow, his arrows keen,  
Rare beasts, and birds with plumage bright  
("The Blind Highland Boy," 106-108),

we know that he has retained impressions from his reading of books on America, particularly when he tells us in a note that he took a suggestion for the story of the poem from Dampier's *Voyages*.<sup>44</sup> But suggestions from Dampier do not exclude the possibility of coalescing impressions from Bartram where long before he had found "Rare beasts, and birds with plumage bright." Bartram may just as plausibly have suggested, or helped to suggest, such a picture as this:

—Hadst thou been of Indian birth,  
Couched on a casual bed of moss and leaves,  
And rudely canopied by leafy boughs,  
Or to the churlish elements exposed

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<sup>43</sup> *Poems*, VII, 179. The book referred to is Charles Waterton's *Wanderings in South America, the North-west of the United States and the Antilles*. London, 1825.

<sup>44</sup> *Poems*, II, 430. The work referred to is *A New Voyage round the world. Describing particularly the isthmus of America*, etc. By Captain William Dampier. London, 1703-09.

On the blank plains,—the coldness of the night,  
 Or the night's darkness, or its cheerful face  
 Of beauty, by the changing moon adorned,  
 Would, with imperious admonition, then  
 Have scored thine age . . .

("Address to My Infant Daughter Dora," 18-26).

All the elements in this picture are to be found in Bartram, even the "churlish elements" (Bartram's memorable storms) and the "changing moon" (which undergoes a sudden eclipse on p. 51, just four paragraphs after the description of the pelican, which Wordsworth certainly read and used). In Bartram also is to be found the

. . . Indian conjurer  
 Quick . . . in feats of art

("The Kitten and Falling Leaves," 30-31)

Two pages before his description of the Indian headdress, a description which Wordsworth utilized in "Ruth," Bartram presents the "high priest, usually called by the white people . . . conjurers" (p. 497).

It has been stated that Bartram's philosophy, no less than his imagery, is often discernible in Wordsworth. Beginning with "Ruth," where Bartram's notion of an immanent spirit penetrating the mechanisms of nature is echoed, we realize in many other poems that, in the words of Professor Cooper, "Wordsworth's 'pantheism' is more likely to have come from the *Travels* than from other sources sometimes advanced."<sup>45</sup> Such a doctrine as that

Matter and Spirit are as one Machine

("Stanzas Suggested . . . Off St. Bees' Heads," 157)

is, again in Professor Cooper's words, "wholly in keeping with the creed in the *Travels*." A typical expression of this creed is found in the Introduction:

If then the visible, the mechanical part of the animal creation, the mere material part is so admirably beautiful, harmonious and incomprehensible, what must be the intellectual system, that inexpressibly more essential principle, which secretly operates within? that which

<sup>45</sup> *Athenaeum*, April 22, 1905, p. 500.

animates the inimitable machines, which gives them motion, impowers them to speak and perform, this must be divine indeed? (*Travels*, xxiv, xxv).

The truth is that, in spite of an occasional implication of disapproval, Wordsworth found himself kin to the gentle Quaker, wandering in the woods, along rivers and lakes, untrodden ways, watching Indians and traders (Wordsworth's "pedlars"), picking plants, and loving and contemplating all nature. There can be no doubt that "Wordsworth's imaginative acceptance of Bartram is in the long run sympathetic, as is shown by the frequency with which scenery and diction from the 'Travels' rise to the surface in his purest and most characteristic poetry."<sup>46</sup> If Wordsworth, according to his latest biographer, "could paint with power the exotic splendour of the Indian forest,"<sup>47</sup> there was a good reason: Bartram's *Travels*. Nor can there be any doubt as to Wordsworth's philosophical acceptance of Bartram. It is not surprising to find him telling us, in his Fenwick note to "Expostulation and Reply"—surely a poem characteristic of his attitude towards nature—that "This poem is a favourite among the Quakers, as I have learned on many occasions."<sup>48</sup> William Bartram, the Philadelphia Quaker, if asked the same question:

Why, William, sit you thus alone,  
And dream your time away?

would have answered with the same sentiments if not in exactly the same words:

The eye—it cannot choose but see;  
We cannot bid the ear be still;  
Our bodies feel, where'er they be,  
Against or with our will.  
  
Nor less I deem that there are Powers  
Which of themselves our minds impress;  
That we can feed this mind of ours  
In a wise passiveness.

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<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 499.

<sup>47</sup> C. H. Herford, *Wordsworth*, p. 118.

<sup>48</sup> *Poems*, I, 272.



If Bartram seems to have been too active for the last line to apply to him, his activity consisted entirely in seeing and "listening" to Nature. And there were many occasions when he sat in his canoe or under a tree and permitted the "Powers" to feed his mind. Finally, every page of Bartram expresses the call in Wordsworth's sequel to the poem:

Come forth into the light of things,  
Let Nature be your Teacher ("The Tables Turned," 15-16).  
Come forth, and bring with you a heart  
That watches and receives (31-32).

### 3. *Other English Writers*

It is obvious that a book which exerted so strong an influence upon the imagination of such important poets as Coleridge and Wordsworth came to the attention of other English writers. As a matter of fact, there is enough evidence pointing to Bartram's influence on most of the Romantic poets of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Echoes of Bartram seem to recur even in late Victorian literature. The present study cannot hope to work out all the details of such an indebtedness. Further research is needed, the results of which will, it is hoped, make a supplementary study. As a basis for such an investigation certain materials, accumulated in connection with this study, need be set down here:

#### *Dorothy Wordsworth:*

There is no definite statement in any of Dorothy Wordsworth's writings as to her having read Bartram's *Travels*. Yet the probability is strong that she read the book which so powerfully impressed her brother. Her Alfoxden journal indicates the close companionship of the two, who walked and read together and shared their thoughts, and it was at Alfoxden, as we have seen, just before the writing in Germany of "Ruth," that Wordsworth read or reread Bartram. If she did read the travel book, it is, of course, impossible to determine definitely just what influence it had upon her, or even if it had any at all. Professor Lowes, however, has called attention to some "curious

and interesting parallels" between a passage in her Grasmere journal and some lines in Bartram. Describing a field of flowers she saw while out walking she says:

A few primroses by the roadside—wood sorrel flower, the anemone, scentless violets, strawberries, and that starry, yellow flower which Mrs. C. calls pile wort . . . we saw a few daffodils close to the water-side. We fancied that the sea had floated the seeds ashore, and that the little colony had so sprung up. But as we went along there were more and yet more; and at last, under the boughs of the trees, we saw that there was a long belt of them along the shore. . . . I never saw daffodils so beautiful. They grew among the mossy stones about and above them; some rested their heads upon these stones, as on a pillow, for weariness; and the rest tossed and reeled and danced, and seemed as if they verily laughed with the wind, that blew upon them over the lake; they looked so gay, ever glancing, ever changing.<sup>1</sup>

Bartram coming to a "rural retirement" describes "a charming circle of mountain vegetable beauties":

. . . some of these roving beauties are strolling over the mossy, shelving, humid rocks, or from off the expansive wavy boughs of trees, bending over the floods, salute their delusive shades, playing on the surface, some plunge their perfumed heads and bathe their flexible limbs in the silver stream, whilst others by the mountain breezes are tossed about, their blooming tufts bespangled with pearly and chrysaline dew-drops collected from the falling mists, glisten in the rain bow arch (p. 342).

"The likeness," comments Professor Lowes, "is probably sheer coincidence (for William Bartram and Dorothy Wordsworth were kindred souls), but Dorothy must have had the *Travels* well in mind, and there may be touches of unconscious reminiscence in her lovely picture of the daffodils beside the lake."<sup>2</sup>

Such an "unconscious reminiscence" may have also crept into her poem, "Floating Island":<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth*, edited by William Knight. London, 1910, I, 106.

<sup>2</sup> *Xanadu*, p. 506; also see p. 172. The similarity between Dorothy Wordsworth's entry in her journal and Wordsworth's poem "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" is well known. Whether the employment of similar diction in expressing what they saw is also a coincidence, or whether one influenced the other, or both "unconsciously" echo Bartram, remains a subject of speculation.

<sup>3</sup> *Poems by William Wordsworth*, VIII.

Once did I see a slip of earth

Loosed from its hold;—

. . . all might see it float, obedient to the wind;

Might see it, from the mossy shore

Dissevered, float upon the lake,

Float with its crest of trees adorned

On which the warbling birds their pastime take.

Food, shelter, safety, there they find;

There berries ripen, flowerets bloom;

There insects live their lives, and die; . . .

It has been noted that Wordsworth's description of just such an island, in both *The Prelude* and the *Guide to the Lakes*, was influenced by Bartram's floating islands. May not his sister have carried away similar impressions from the same book?

*Robert Southey:*

In the *Catalogue of the Library of Robert Southey*, issued by Sotheby & Company, May, 1884, Item 125 reads, "Bartram (Wm.) Travels—1794." Southey, then, owned a copy of the second London edition of Bartram's *Travels*, the same edition a copy of which, we have seen, was also owned by Coleridge. His interest in America, however, dates earlier. In a letter to Horace Walpole Bedford, dated at Bristol, on November 13, 1793, he writes:

It was the favourite intention of Cowley to retire with books to a cottage in America, and seek that happiness in solitude which he could not find in society. My asylum there would be for different reasons. . . . I should be pleased to reside in a country where men's abilities would ensure respect; where society was upon a proper footing, and man was considered as more valuable than money; and where I could till the earth, and provide by honest industry the meat which my wife would dress with pleasing care. . . .<sup>4</sup>

A month and a day later he writes to Grosvenor C. Bedford:

Now, if you are in the mood for a reverie, fancy only me in America; imagine my ground uncultivated since creation, and see me wielding

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<sup>4</sup> *The Life and Correspondence of the late Robert Southey*, edited by his son, the Rev'd Charles Cuthbert Southey. London, 1849, I, 193-94.

the axe, now to cut down the tree, and now the snakes that nestled in it. Then see me grubbing up the roots, and building a nice snug little dairy with them, three rooms in my cottage, and my only companion some poor negro whom I have bought on purpose to emancipate. After a hard day's toil, see me sleep upon rushes, and, in very bad weather, take out my casette and write to you . . . till at last comes an ill-looking Indian with a tomahawk, and scalps me . . . poor Southey will . . . be cooked for a Cherokee. . . .<sup>5</sup>

Southey specifically mentions Bartram in a note to *Madoc*. Referring to the lines

On the top  
Of yon magnolia the loud turkey's voice  
Is heralding the dawn,

he quotes this passage from Bartram:

I was awakened in the morning early, by the cheering converse of the wild turkey-cock (*Meleagris occidentalis*) saluting each other, from the sun-brightened tops of the lofty *Cupressus disticha* and *Magnolia grandiflora*. They begin at early dawn, and continue till sun-rise, from March to the last of April. The high forests ring with the noise, like the crowing of the domestic cock, of these social centinels, the watch-word being caught and repeated, from one to another, for hundreds of miles around; insomuch, that the whole country is, for an hour or more, in a universal shout. A little after sun-rise, their crowing gradually ceases, they quit their high lodging places, and alight on the earth, where, expanding their silver-bordered train, they strut and dance round about the coy female, while the deep forests seem to tremble with their shrill noise.—Bartram.<sup>6</sup>

To appreciate the use that Southey made of Bartram it is necessary to quote more than the few lines from his poem which he himself quotes.

The owls have ceased their night-song. On the top  
Of yon magnolia the loud turkey's voice  
Is heralding the dawn; from tree to tree  
Extends the wakening watch-note, far and wide,  
Till the whole woodlands echo with the cry.  
Now breaks the morning— (XI, 29-34)

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 196.

<sup>6</sup> *Poetical Works*, V, 429. The quotation is from *Travels*, pp. 81-82 (second London ed); pp. 83-84 (Phila. ed.).



A fairly faithful adaptation—except the owls, but they too, we have seen, are in Bartram, though in a different place. That there are numerous other places in *Madoc* where Southey drew upon Bartram is a plausible hypothesis. He himself has told us that he had at first planned to locate the poem in Peru, and then changed to Florida. "Here," he writes, "instead of the Peruvians, who have no striking manners for my poem, we get among the wild North American Indians; on their customs and superstitions, facts must be grounded, and woven into the work. . . ."<sup>7</sup> That he gained his facts largely from travel books is obvious from his own footnotes. Professor Fairchild is justified in his comment that "*Madoc* . . . is simply crammed with savage lore,"<sup>8</sup> and cites Southey's references to "Franklin, Carver, Lafitau, Charlevoix, Mackenzie, Oviedo, Torquemada, Bernal Diaz, Padilla, Garcia, Clavigero, Bartram, Garcilaso de la Vega, Herrera, Heriot, Timberlake, Pietro Martire, Brainerd, Roger Williams, Priest, and Pero Nino."<sup>9</sup> This is not a complete list of Southey's sources of his American lore. Another list could be drawn up from his entries in his *Common-Place Books*. For instance, in a section entitled, "American Tribes, Incidental and Miscellaneous Illustrations" (Second Series), he draws upon many of the authorities already mentioned and also upon Langsdorff, Fleckno, Dobrizhoffer, La Codamine, Vancouver, Adair, Perez de Ribas, Bandini, Buchanan, Stedman, Du Pratz, Volney, Winterbottom, Gage, Nieuhoff, Cockburn, De Monts, Baron de Lahontan, Hubbard, De la Salle, Smith, Hennepin, and Woolman. Nor is this a complete list. It is only logical to assume that if Southey wanted "savage lore" of Florida he could not ignore Bartram's *Travels*.

It is important to remember once more that the poetic imagination adapts, combines, and transmutes the material it borrows. Southey's *Songs of the American Indians* bear titles which would seem to exclude the possibility of a Bartram influence. "The Huron's Address to the Dead," "The Peruvian's Dirge over the Body of his Father," "Song of the Araucans"—these

<sup>7</sup> *Life and Correspondence*, II, 21. Letter to Thomas Southey, Friday, July 12, 1799.

<sup>8</sup> *The Noble Savage*, p. 199.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 206.

do not suggest Bartram material. The "Song of the Chikkasah Widow" and "The Old Chikkasah to his Grandson" promise only slightly more. Yet these *Songs* deserve attention. What may have happened can best be illustrated by reference to another poem of Southey's, "The King of the Crocodiles." In his notes on that poem he refers to a superstition existing among the Egyptians concerning crocodiles, which he had read in "Brown's *Travels*"; in defence of an incident in the poem, "the woman's attack upon her intended devourer," he refers to "Mr. Waterton's *Wanderings*."<sup>10</sup> The two books evidently supplied material which fused in one and the same poem. The notes to "A Tale of Paraguay," a lengthy poem, illustrate even more strongly the multiplicity of sources upon which Southey drew. That some images and suggestions which had come out of the books had become so thoroughly assimilated as to seem spontaneous and original with him and therefore to need no notes is also a probability to be considered.

*William Lisle Bowles:*

This poet, who left his mark on the work of Coleridge,<sup>11</sup> and who in 1855 was called by the Rev. George Gilfillan "the father of modern poetry,"<sup>12</sup> acknowledged his indebtedness to Bartram in at least one place. In "Banwell Hill" he writes:

Not sweeter, where thy mighty waters weep,  
Missouri, through the night of forests deep,  
Resounds, from glade to glade, from rock to hill,  
While fervent harmonies the wild wood fill,  
The solitary note of whip-poor-will (115-119).

In a footnote to these lines he adds:

The "whip-poor-will" is a bird so called in America, from his uttering those distinct sounds, at intervals, among the various wild harmonies of the forest. See Bartram's *Travels in America*.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *Poetical Works*, VI, 96.

<sup>11</sup> See the latter's sonnet, "To William Lisle Bowles."

<sup>12</sup> *The Poetical Works of William Lisle Bowles*. Edinburgh, 1855, II, v.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 47. Cf. "The groves resound the unceasing cries of the whip-poor-will" (*Travels*, p. 51) and "The shades of silent night are made more cheerful, with the shrill voice of the whip-poor-will" (p. 154).

Later in the same poem he writes:

He had no friend on earth, save one blue jay,  
Which, from the Mississippi, far away,  
O'er the Atlantic, to his native land  
He brought . . . (424-427)

and adds in a footnote, "The blue jay of the Mississippi. See Chateaubriand's Indian song in 'Atala.' " <sup>14</sup> The particular passage in the Indian song referred to is .

If the blue jay of the Meschaceba (Mississippi) should say to the nonpareil of Florida, 'Why do you mourn so bitterly? Have you not here pleasant waters and delightful shades, and all kinds of food, as well as in your own forests?' 'Yes,' the fugitive nonpareil would answer; 'but my nest is in the jessamine; who will bring that to me? and have you the sun of my savanna?' <sup>15</sup>

That Chateaubriand owed both his blue jay of this Mississippi and his nonpareil of Florida to Bartram will be shown in a little while. Here, it need be pointed out, Bowles shows an influence of Bartram; in one instance he went directly to the *Travels*, in another he went to Chateaubriand, but the images in both cases came out of Bartram.

It is not possible to trace Bowles's indebtedness to Bartram in other poems with as much certainty as in "Banwell Hill." Yet his "Song of the American Indian," with its "hills sublime," its "winding river," its "gladsome toil" of the Indians, its alligator and tiger and "beauteous cardinal," its "hoary oaks" and "craggy banks—O'erhung with stately cypress-ranks," and its "trim canoe"—has all the marks of Bartram. So has his "The Missionary," so full of Indian lore and American landscape, obviously adapted from various travel books.

### *Thomas Campbell:*

While *Gertrude of Wyoming* is located in Pennsylvania, Campbell's landscape is far from being Pennsylvanian. In spite of the fact that his father had spent many years in Virginia,<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 57.

<sup>15</sup> *Atala* by F. A. Chateaubriand. Translated (1802) from the French by Caleb Bingham. Stanford University Press reprint, edited by William Leonard Schwartz, 1930, p. 47.

<sup>16</sup> *D. N. B.*, VIII, 393.

Campbell evidently drew mainly on colorful travel books for his information about America. He sees flamingoes disporting themselves on the lakes; he hears the merry mock-bird's song; and for "pastime" he suggests doing battle with the crocodile. An insight into his sources is gained from his notes. For the mocking-bird he quotes a description from Ashe; for the Indians' "swarthy lineaments" he quotes from the *Travels through America by Captains Lewis and Clarke*, 1804-5-6; for his "tree-rocked cradle" of the Indian child he quotes Weld;<sup>17</sup> for the fortitude of the Indian character he quotes Adair;<sup>18</sup> for the Indians' superstitions regarding dreams he quotes Charlevoix;<sup>19</sup> for his use of a part of Logan's famous speech he quotes, of course, Thomas Jefferson;<sup>20</sup> and for the crocodile he quotes Bartram.

Bartram's authority is invoked to explain the lines

The crocodile, the condor of the rock,  
Shall be the pastime of thy sylvan wars;  
(Part I, stanzas xxvi)

Four paragraphs are quoted from the *Travels*, beginning with "The alligator<sup>21</sup> when full grown is a very large and terrible creature" and ending with "He acts his part like an Indian chief, when rehearsing his feats of war." It is safe to say that if Campbell, when he came to write of America, remembered Bartram's alligators, he probably remembered many other things which he failed to annotate. Campbell's Pennsylvania looks more like Bartram's southern region than its own reality. It is

<sup>17</sup> Isaac Weld, *Travels in North America*. London, 1800. 3d ed.

<sup>18</sup> James Adair, *General Observations on the American Indians*. London, 1775.

<sup>19</sup> Pierre François de Charlevoix, *Journal of a Voyage to North America*.

<sup>20</sup> *Notes on Virginia*.

<sup>21</sup> Here Campbell adds: "or American crocodile." The quotation differs in some respects from any of the known English texts. Campbell has evidently changed the punctuation and slightly compressed the passage. From the fact, however, that he lists the book as *Bertram's Travels* (*Poetical Works*. London, 1837, p. 297) and calls the author "Bertram," it is more than probable that he used the Dublin edition, 1793, pp. 126-129. The binding of the copy of that edition in The Johns Hopkins University library, presumably the original Dublin binding, labels the book as "Bertram's Travels."



"picturesque and balmy" with "fields that [are] a luxury to roam," with "pastoral savannahs," and its hills are "with high magnolia overgrown" as well as with the "palm-tree."

*Felicia Hemans:*

The poems of Felicia Hemans which deal with America are directly based on her wide reading. Her interest in America was keen. When her popularity invaded Boston and Cambridge she corresponded with such men as Bancroft,<sup>22</sup> Norton, and Channing,<sup>23</sup> who from time to time sent her American books. The notes to her poems bristle with references to various travel books, so that Miss Duméril is right in her claim that "Ce sont des récits de voyages qui ont inspiré les *Lays of Many Lands*, où elle poétise des traditions de diverses contrées de l'Ancien ou du Nouveau Monde." She is not entirely right when she adds, "Elle s'est servie, en particulier, des *Travels through North and South Carolina*, de Bartram, et des *Recollections of the Valley of the Mississippi*, du missionnaire américain Flint,"<sup>24</sup> for in her notes to this group of poems Mrs. Hemans refers to no less than eighteen different sources, among them Bartram.

Her specific indebtedness to Bartram is indicated by a long quotation from the *Travels*, prefaced to her poem, "The Isle of Founts. An Indian Tradition":

The river St. Mary has its source from a vast lake or marsh, which lies between Flint and Oakmulge rivers, and occupies a space of near three hundred miles in circuit. This vast accumulation of waters, in the wet season, appears as a lake, and contains some large islands or knolls of rich high land; one of which the present generation of the Creek Indians represent to be a most blissful spot of earth; they say it is inhabited by a peculiar race of Indians, whose women are incomparably beautiful. They also tell you that this terrestrial paradise has been seen by some of their enterprising hunters, when in pursuit of game; but that in their endeavors to approach it, they were involved in

<sup>22</sup> See *Memoir of Mrs. Hemans by her Sister. The Works of Mrs. Hemans*. Philadelphia, 1840, I, 113-114.

<sup>23</sup> See *Memorials of Mrs. Hemans*. By Henry F. Chorley. New York, 1836, I, 108.

<sup>24</sup> Edith Duméril. *Une femme poète au déclin du romantisme anglais: Felicia Hemans*. Doctoral dissertation. Toulouse, 1929, p. 155.

perpetual labyrinths, and, like enchanted land, still as they imagined they had just gained it, it seemed to fly before them, alternately appearing and disappearing. They resolved, at length, to leave the delusive pursuit, and to return; which, after a number of difficulties, they effected. When they reported their adventures to their countrymen, the young warriors were inflamed with an irresistible desire to invade, and make a conquest of so charming a country; but all their attempts have hitherto proved abortive, never having been able again to find that enchanting spot.<sup>25</sup>

Using this tradition as a basis Mrs. Hemans weaves into her poem details borrowed from other sources. Bartram and the reports of South American missionaries merge with "merely imaginary circumstances"<sup>26</sup> and produce a poem studded with blue hills, shining lakes, fountain isles, serpent kings, cougars, groves and fruits.

Mrs. Hemans, however, does not always indicate her sources, and then, of course, her borrowings are harder to trace. That Bartram influenced her work is certain not only because of her own acknowledgement in "The Isle of Founts" but also because of another poem, "The Aged Indian," in which no acknowledgements of any kind appear. The poem begins:

Warriors! my noon of life is past,  
The brightness of my spirit flown;  
I crouch before the wintry blast,  
Amidst my tribe I dwell alone;  
The heroes of my youth are fled,  
They rest among the warlike dead.

Then follow seven stanzas in which the aged Indian reviews his brave past and recalls the deeds of his companions, all now in the "shadowy land"; then in a final stanza he concludes his address:

Sons of the brave! delay no more,  
The spirits of my kindred call;  
'Tis but one pang, and all is o'er!  
Oh! bid the aged cedar fall!  
To join the brethren of his prime,  
The mighty of departed time.

<sup>25</sup> The quotation is an abridgement of a long paragraph, pp. 24-26.

<sup>26</sup> *Poetical Works*, IV, 110.

That this is an adaptation of Bartram's story of the aged warrior he saw at Mucclasse town is more than probable. "One morning," says Bartram of this "very aged man,"

after his attendants had led him to the council fire, before seating himself, he addressed himself to the people after this manner—

'You yet love; what can I do now to merit your regard? nothing; I am good for nothing; I cannot see to shoot the buck or hunt up the sturdy bear; I know I am but a burden to you; I have lived long enough; now let my spirit go; I want to see the warriors of my youth in the country of spirits; (bareing his breast) here is the hatchet, take it and strike' (p. 500).

Bartram's influence on Mrs. Hemans is not always so direct as in "The Isle of Founts" and "The Aged Indian." In a note to a line in "Modern Greece":

And isles of flowers, bright-floating o'er the tide  
(stanza XV, l. 3),

she quotes <sup>27</sup> Chateaubriand's

La grace est toujours unie à la magnificence dans les scènes de la nature: et tandis que le courant du milieu entraîne vers la mer les cadavres des pins et de chênes, on voit sur les deux courant latéraux, remonter, le long des rivages des îles flottantes de Pistia et de Nénuphar, dont les roses jaunes s'élèvent comme de petits papillons.<sup>28</sup>

In both her line and her source we recognize, of course, Bartram's *Pistia stratiotes*, that "very singular aquatic plant" which "associates in . . . floating islands" and which, we saw, vividly impressed Wordsworth. But whether coming through Chateaubriand or directly from the *Travels* there is more of Bartram than the floating island in this poem. Her exiled Greeks find themselves in unmistakably Bartram's Florida.

There, by some lake, whose blue expansive breast  
Bright from afar, an inland ocean, gleams,  
Girt with vast solitudes, profusely dress'd  
In tints . . .  
Or where some flood from pine-clad mountain pours  
Its might of waters, glittering in their foam,

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 212.

<sup>28</sup> *Atala*. See Bingham's translation (Stanford University reprint), p. 14.

'Midst the rich verdure of its wooded shores,  
 . . . round the wild retreat  
 Scarce have the paths been trod by Indian huntsman's feet.  
 (Stanza xiv)

The forests are around him in their pride,  
 The green savannas, and the mighty waves;  
 . . . o'er his head  
 The ancient cedars wave their peopled bowers,  
 On high the palms their graceful foliage spread,  
 Cinctured with roses the magnolia towers,  
 And from those green arcades a thousand tones  
 Wake with each breeze, whose voice through Nature's  
 temple moans. (Stanza xv) <sup>29</sup>

Another instance of Chateaubriand's influence on Mrs. Hemans is to be found in her "The Stranger in Louisiana." The poem is prefaced by a quotation from Picart's *Ceremonies and Religious Customs* and by another from Chateaubriand's *Souvenirs d'Amerique*. These two are obviously the joint source of her material in this case.<sup>30</sup>

It is not possible to claim a Bartram influence on poems for which Mrs. Hemans specifically gives other sources. Nevertheless there is always a possibility that a poet unconsciously draws upon the store of impressions which have accumulated from previous reading. These impressions merge with, support and round out, as it were, the impressions freshly drawn from a new or recent source. Mrs. Hemans indicates specific sources other than Bartram for her poems, "Edith, a Tale of the Woods," "Indian Woman's Death-Song," "The American Forest Girl," "The Indian with his Dead Child," "The Exile's Dirge," and "The Indian's Revenge," yet in all of them certain glimpses of landscape and often the diction and imagery are strongly reminiscent of Bartram. For "The Forest Sanctuary" and "The Indian's Revenge" she quotes from Campbell's *Gertrude of Wyoming* among the sources, a poem upon which Bartram, as has been shown, had a considerable influence.

<sup>29</sup> Parallels for almost every line and image in these stanzas abound in Bartram.

<sup>30</sup> *Poetical Works*, IV, 108.



*Charles Lamb:*

It might be expected, with good reason, that a man who was as close a friend to Coleridge as Charles Lamb was would read Bartram's *Travels*. Coleridge was not in the habit of keeping his literary enthusiasms to himself. And indeed Lamb did read the book. Among the contribution to the *Morning Post* which Mr. Lucas believes Lamb wrote appears the following, on November 2, 1803:

Bartram, who, as a *traveller*, was possessed of a very *lively fancy*, describes vast plains in the interior of America, where his *horse's fetlocks* for miles were dyed a perfect *blood colour*, in the juice of the *wild strawberries*. A less ardent fancy than Bartram's may apply this beautiful phenomenon of summer, to solve the present *strawberry appearance* of the *female leg* this autumn in England.<sup>31</sup>

*Percy Bysshe Shelley:*

In a note to *The Revolt of Islam*<sup>32</sup> George Edward Woodberry points to the similarity between Shelley's expression

Creaked with the weight of birds (X, xviii, 5).

and Coleridge's "Flew creaking o'er thy head." It will be recalled that Coleridge justified his use of the phrase by invoking Bartram's authority. It is possible, of course, that Shelley's use of the word "creaked" as applied to the flight of birds is a mere coincidence, but then, again, it may be an echo of Coleridge and thus an echo of Bartram. That Coleridge did influence Shelley is attested by Brandl, who remarks that "Lewti" had "a special charm for Shelley, who in his 'Indian Serenade,' has imitated both matter and manner."<sup>33</sup> "Lewti," we may again recall, owed much of its charm to Bartram.

Whether Shelley read Bartram, after being referred to him

<sup>31</sup> *Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*. Edited by E. V. Lucas. London, 1903, II, 441.

<sup>32</sup> *The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. Cambridge Ed., Boston, 1901, p. 619.

<sup>33</sup> Alois Brandl: *Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the English Romantic School*. English edition by Lady Eastlake. London, 1887, p. 191.

by Coleridge, or whether he acquired a Bartram coloring through reading Coleridge, one other spot in *The Revolt of Islam* deserves attention. It is the description of the conflict between an eagle and a snake, in some respects reminiscent of Bartram's description of the fight between a hawk and a snake—a passage which, we have seen, had its influence on Coleridge. Shelley's description is detailed and vivid:

Feather and scale inextricably blended.  
The Serpent's mailed and many-colored skin  
Shone through the plumes its coils were twined within  
By many a swollen and knotted fold, and high  
And far, the neck receding lithe and thin,  
Sustained a crested head, which warily  
Shifted and glanced before the Eagle's steadfast eye (I, ix).

Bartram's coach-whip snake, it may be well to repeat, "wreathed himself several times round the hawk's body, who had but one of his wings at liberty" (p. 218); the snake, he relates, "dexterously and luckily threw himself in coils round [the hawk's] body" (p. 219).

### *Other Romantic Writers*

Samuel Rogers and other English writers of the period may, upon careful investigation, disclose a Bartram influence. Samuel Rogers's *Voyage of Columbus* is saturated with American lore and images derived from travel books. Among books cited in the notes to this poem Bartram's *Travels* does not appear, but it would not be surprising to discover that his book remained among those not cited but nevertheless consulted. Thomas Moore in his *Poems Relating to America* indicates a familiarity with the American scene and with the literature on American travel. His visit to America may account for his hostility towards American institutions and manners but it does not account for all the details of his landscape description. Byron was acquainted with at least Imlay's *Description of the Western Territory*.<sup>34</sup> DeQuincey, Hazlitt, and "Christopher North" also deserve attention in this connection.

<sup>34</sup> See *Don Juan*, VIII.

*Alfred Tennyson:*

A correspondent in *The Academy* for October 23, 1897, has observed the relation between Wordsworth's "Ruth" and a story about Tennyson and Wordsworth told by Aubrey de Vere. Tennyson had called on Wordsworth and found him rather "cold." To stimulate "some latent ardours" in the older poet, Tennyson told him "of a tropical island where the trees, when they first come into leaf, were a vivid scarlet, every one of them . . . one flush . . . the colour of blood." It seems that Wordsworth failed to be stimulated by this colorful story, and the correspondent in *The Academy* explains why. He recalls that, more than forty years before the two poets had this conversation, Wordsworth had written in "Ruth":

He told of the Magnolia, spread  
High as a cloud, high over head!  
The cypress and her spire;  
—Of flowers that with one scarlet gleam  
Cover a hundred leagues, and seem  
To set the hills on fire.

"The Old Poet," concludes the correspondent, "may have considered that there was no need to glow twice."<sup>35</sup> The problem that this story poses is: Had Tennyson come upon the same book which had inspired Wordsworth's stanza close to a half-century before? It is probable. Tennyson's interest in plants and animals is well-known and Bartram was not only a botanist, an ornithologist and zoologist, but also an interesting describer of the life and behavior of plants and animals.

In *In Memoriam* appear the lines

Like birds the charming serpent draws,  
To drop head-foremost in the jaws  
Of vacant darkness and to cease (XXXIV, 14-16).

Of course Tennyson could have found this popular belief in numerous places. Yet Bartram's version is so strikingly similar as to suggest itself as a probable source:

<sup>35</sup> "Tennyson and Wordsworth," *The Academy*, October 2, 1897, p. 331.

They [rattle snakes] are supposed to have the power of fascination in an eminent degree, so as to inthral their prey. It is generally believed that they charm birds . . . and by stedfastly looking at them possess them with infatuation; be the cause what it may, the miserable creatures undoubtedly strive by every possible means to escape, but alas! their endeavors are in vain, they at last loose (sic) the power of resistance, and flutter or move slowly, but reluctantly towards the yawning jaws of their devourers, and *creep into their mouths* . . . (p. 267).

And is it another mere coincidence that the line

Caught by the flower that closes on the fly ("The Ring")

should have a parallel passage in Bartram:

Astonishing production! see the incarnate lobes expanding, how gay and ludicrous they appear! ready on the spring to intrap incautious deluded insects, what artifice! there behold one of the leaves just closed upon a struggling fly . . . (p. xx).

#### *Thomas Carlyle:*

Carlyle's tribute to Bartram, in his correspondence with Emerson,<sup>36</sup> has been quoted in the Preface. It indicates that he read the *Travels* with great enjoyment and suggests that an inquiry into the influence of Bartram on Carlyle might not prove fruitless.

#### 4. *American Literature*

Bartram's work has apparently had less influence upon the literature of his own country. This is only logical. His scene has been a closer reality to the American writer and has therefore not had the exotic fascination it seems to have had for the European. Nevertheless, Bartram's *Travels* could hardly have been entirely overlooked by the American writer. Interest in nature characterizes much of American literature; in fact, as Professor Foerster has shown, "With only two or three exceptions, all our major writers have displayed both a striking curiosity as to the facts of the external world—an intellectual conscience in seeking to know them with exactness—and an ardent emotional devotion to nature because of her beauty or

<sup>36</sup> II, 228.



divinity. . . ."<sup>1</sup> Bartram's keen observation, vivid description, and "emotional devotion" have undoubtedly produced their echoes. But that is a subject comprehensive enough for a separate study. The following "echoes" suggest that Bartram *has* made an impression on American literature.

The similarity between Emerson's "Nature" and Bartram's general philosophy of nature has been casually noted. It is not likely that Emerson, after receiving Carlyle's eulogistic letter about the *Travels* would fail to become acquainted with the book—if he had not been acquainted with it already. Just what impression Bartram made upon him remains a subject for investigation.

So does the problem of Thoreau's indebtedness to Bartram. Here we have specific references to begin with. In *Walden* Thoreau, speaking of the customs among the savage nations, exclaims: "Would it not be well if we were to celebrate such a 'busk,' or 'feast of first fruits,' as Bartram describes to have been the custom of the Mucclasse Indians?" He then quotes Bartram's description of such a celebration (pp. 509-510).<sup>2</sup> Even more interesting is the fact that Thoreau's knowledge of Bartram included more than acquaintance with the *Travels*. In *Excursions*, speaking of the jay, he remarks: "I can confirm what William Bartram wrote to Wilson, the ornithologist, that 'The jay is one of the most useful agents in the economy of nature. . . .'"<sup>3</sup>

It would be natural to expect that American poets would find Bartram stimulating reading. Thomas Holley Chivers published, in 1837, a long poem entitled *Nacoochee; or, the Beautiful Star*. While it is not true that "the whole of it is the author's embodiment of an old Creek legend given currency by Bartram,"<sup>4</sup> it is true that Chivers made use of Bartram's legend of a "most blissful spot of earth" as the locale of another

<sup>1</sup> Norman Foerster, *Nature in American Literature*. New York, 1923, p. xiii.

<sup>2</sup> *The Writings of Henry David Thoreau*. Riverside edition. Boston, II, 108-109.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, IX, 244.

<sup>4</sup> Dorothy Anne Dondore, *The Prairie and the Making of Middle America: Four Centuries of Description*. Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1926, p. 250.

legendary story. It is highly probable, however, that Chivers got Bartram's legend not from Bartram's book directly but through some English poet. Townsend's statement, "Really nothing but echoes of his poetical masters—Moore, Coleridge, Blake, Keats, Shelley, and the Bible—can be found in 'Nacoochee,'" <sup>5</sup> overlooks one important "master"—Felicia Hemans. What Chivers thought of Felicia Hemans can be gleaned from his eulogy of her in his elegy "The Mighty Dead." <sup>6</sup> We have seen that Mrs. Hemans used the same legend from Bartram in her "Isle of Founts. An Indian Tradition," which she prefaced by a lengthy quotation from Bartram. Chivers may have become acquainted with this Indian tradition through Mrs. Hemans's quotation and poem.

If this supposition be true, it is likely that Chivers was stimulated to read Bartram for himself, for in his *Atlanta*,<sup>7</sup> published twenty-six years after *Nacoochee*, he again makes use of the same Indian tradition, and this time he elaborates the locale with details which are in Bartram. Chiver's Lost Paradise is "a disappearing and unapproachable isle in the great Okefinokee swamps." <sup>8</sup> Bartram states that "The river St. Mary has its source from a vast lake, or marsh, called Ouaquaphe-nogaw" (p. 24); then he goes on to locate his "most blissful spot" in that swamp. Chivers's hero dines on grapes, nectarines, apples, pears, "delicious dates," etc.; Bartram's strayed warriors dine on "fruit, oranges, dates, &c." (p. 25). These details are not in Mrs. Hemans's quotation, but Mrs. Hemans does speak of a "mighty serpent king" (l. 7) and Bartram does not. The conclusion to which these facts lead is that Chivers read both Mrs. Hemans and Bartram and merged images from both into a tale of his own. In any case, his imagination was fired by the Creek legend which was first narrated by Bartram.

<sup>5</sup> John Wilson Townsend, "Thomas Holley Chivers," *Library of Southern Literature*. Atlanta, Ga., 1909, II, 846.

<sup>6</sup> See S. Foster Damon, *Thomas Holley Chivers, Friend of Poe*. New York, 1930, p. 189.

<sup>7</sup> *Atlanta: or The True Blessed Island of Poesy. A Paul Epic—in three Lustra*. By T. H. Chivers, M.D. Macon, Ga., 1853.

<sup>8</sup> Damon, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

Many years later the imagination of another American writer was stimulated by Bartram's description of a Florida fountain. Lafcadio Hearn in his *Leaves from the Diary of an Impressionist* sketches just such a fountain and his imagery reads indeed like "sublimated Bartram."<sup>9</sup> Hearn's fountain is "a flood of fluid crystal," eight miles long. Even where it is fifty feet deep every pebble can be seen, "every atom of sparkling sand";<sup>10</sup> "fishes shoot by like flashes of opal." The source of the fountain is a great basin. "From what unilluminated caverns," asks Hearn, "what subterranean lakes,—burst this prodigious flow?"<sup>11</sup> Bartram's fountain is six miles long; its water is so "transparent" that he could see "the sandy bottom, and the several nations of fish, passing and repassing each other" (p. 159). Bartram enters this "pellucid stream" and sails "over the heads of innumerable squadrons of fish, which, although many feet deep in the water, were distinctly to be seen" (p. 160). There is implied wonder in his notation: "just under my feet was the enchanting and amazing chrystal fountain, which incessantly threw up, from dark, rocky caverns below, tons of water every minute, forming a bason . . ." (p. 165). One passage in Hearn is especially significant:

I sank to sleep and dreamed. . . . It seemed to me that I was floating,—lying in a canoe, and all alone,—down some dark and noiseless current,—between forests endless and vast. . . . White mosses dropped to sweep my face; phantoms of cypress put forth long hands to seize. Again I saw the writhing and the nodding of the palms. . . . And still I drifted with the mighty stream, feeling less than an insect in those ever-growing enormities; and a thin Voice like a wind came weirdly questioning: "*How! thou dreamer of dreams!*—hast ever dreamed aught like unto this?—This is the Architecture of God!"<sup>12</sup>

Here Bartram's ability to give himself to nature, to "loaf and invite" his soul, to see his rich, subtropical country with eyes in which aesthetic pleasure merges with mystic wonder—here it all finds a congenial echo in Lafcadio Hearn, himself a strange exotic of nature.

<sup>9</sup> *Xanadu*, p. 587.

<sup>10</sup> *Leaves from the Diary of an Impressionist* (1911), p. 56.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

5. *Continental Writers**Chateaubriand:*

Mention of Chateaubriand in connection with Bartram has been made repeatedly in the preceding pages. That he was influenced by Bartram has been definitely established in a series of studies by French scholars; that he in turn influenced the description of American landscape in English poetry has been shown in this study. As early as 1827 a writer in the *American Quarterly Review*<sup>1</sup> expressed a doubt that Monsieur de Chateaubriand ever actually saw Florida or Louisiana. In France doubt of Chateaubriand's description of America began even earlier.<sup>2</sup> In this century the question has been opened up again, with the result that a number of Chateaubriand's sources for his knowledge of the American scene have been uncovered. Following upon the work of Joseph Bédier, who first mentioned Bartram as one of the sources to which Chateaubriand owed a debt,<sup>3</sup> Professor Gilbert Chinard has made a comprehensive study of Chateaubriand's American experiences, descriptions and sources.<sup>4</sup> In an earlier work Professor Chinard pointed out that Chateaubriand himself had confessed that in his *Le Voyage en Amérique* he had included "quelques extraits des voyages de Bartram que j'avais traduits avec assez de soin."<sup>5</sup> That the "quelques extraits" was most of the scenery and a good deal of his imagery, as well as his Indian lore,—and not only in his *Travels in America* but also in other works as well—is proved by Professor Chinard, who cites parallel after parallel, striking and unmistakable.<sup>6</sup>

The following selections from Professor Cloran's notes to his

<sup>1</sup> December, 1827, p. 460.

<sup>2</sup> Emma Kate Armstrong, "Chateaubriand's America." *P. M. L. A.*, XXII, New series 15, 1907, p. 345.

<sup>3</sup> *Etudes critiques*, Paris, 1903, pp. 127-294.

<sup>4</sup> Gilbert Chinard, *L'Exotisme Américain dans l'Oeuvre de Chateaubriand*, Paris, 1918.

<sup>5</sup> *University of California Publications, Modern Philology*, IV, 297.

<sup>6</sup> See especially *L'Exotisme*, pp. 251-271.



edition of *Atala*<sup>7</sup> are illustrative of the type, extent, and use of Chateaubriand's borrowings from Bartram:

Page 2. 20. *On voit sur les deux courants latéraux remonter, le long des rivages, des îles flottantes de pistia et nénuphar. . . .* Chateaubriand is indebted for these floating islands with their strange passengers to Bartram, who observed the same phenomenon in the Saint John's river in Florida.

22. *nénuphar*. Bartram says of the *Nymphaea nelumbo* (yellow water-lily): "These fine flowers . . ." (p. 407). He mentions this flower with the *Pistia stratiotes* (p. 228).<sup>8</sup>

30. *des savannes*. . . . Savannas are repeatedly mentioned by Bartram.

Page 3. 17. *Les vignes sauvages, les bignonias*. Bartram says that the grape vines which he saw . . . (p. 85). The bignonia often has beautiful flowers (pp. 85, 134, 332, 399, 466).

18. *les coloquintes*. It is doubtless the wild squash (*Cucurbita peregrina*) described by Bartram . . . (p. 135).

In this way Professor Cloran traces to Bartram Chateaubriand's tulip and magnolia trees, the red cedar, the blue malva, the fiery azalea, white moss, live oaks, *mimosa sensitiva*, the black squirrel (also described by Charlevoix), snakes, crocodile nests, Seminole horses, tigers, the mocking-bird, woodpeckers, cardinals, the humming-bird, the nonpareil, strawberries, hickory milk (*creme de noix*), canoes, the "World of Spirits," wells, harmony in nature ("Bartram is a poet in prose"),<sup>9</sup> physical appearance of the Seminoles, Indian towns of Cuscowilla, Sticoe and Joe, Indian mico or king, Indian architecture, Indian council, treatment of captives, Indian game of ball, beautiful Indian women, property ownership among the Indians, itinerary of the lovers, view from the Occone mountain, the story of the aged Indian.

Professor Chinard feels that Chateaubriand's indebtedness to Bartram was great enough to warrant the assertion: "Son oeuvre marque une date . . . dans la carrière de Chateaubriand."

<sup>7</sup> *Atala* par François-Auguste Chateaubriand. Edited with Introduction, Notes and Vocabularly by Timothy Cloran. New York, 1911.

<sup>8</sup> Professor Cloran's page references are to the Dublin edition of the *Travels*.

<sup>9</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 97.

Having discovered Bartram, Professor Chinard shrewdly hints, Chateaubriand had no need to go elsewhere in search of the remote.<sup>10</sup> Bartram furnished him with all the elements and the colors he needed in order to paint his backdrop: exotic plants and animals, Indians, landscapes, and the sounds and silences of nature in the desert.

Specifically, Professor Chinard annotates fifty passages in *Les Natchez* which derive from Bartram. The Cherokee virgins gathering strawberries and the "well-formed Muscogulge women"; the baskets of "choicest fruit" with which Bartram was treated in an Indian hut; the Indian athletic games and musical instruments; the hibiscus plant, the *oenothera grandiflora*, the *Gordonia lasianthus*, the *Illicium Floridanum*, and the *Dionea muscipula*; the "delicious jelly" made from the roots of the smilax and the cream made from hickory nuts; the "new and beautiful species of verbena"; the table "spread under the shadow of Oaks, Palms, and Sweet Bays"; the warrior "stone-blind by extreme old age"; the music of the nonpareil, the mock bird, the "brilliant humming bird," the blue linnet, the golden icterus, and the whip-poor-will; the cooings of the dove and "the cheerful converse of the wild turkey-cocks"; the flight of the savanna crane; the water-hen, the pelican, and the rice bird; the Indian high priest; the Indian burying ground; the dress of the Cherokees, Muscogulges, Seminoles, Chicasaws, and Chactaws; the funeral dirge of the sachems; the singing and dancing of Indian maidens; the battle of the crocodiles; the roaring of the bull frog; the long black snake, "perfectly inoffensive and free from venom" ("—qui ne fait point de mal"); the tropical tempests; Bartram's arrival at the village of Talahasochte; description of the ephemera—all of these, in one form or another, find a place in Chateaubriand's work.

One must also add to these specific debts the less tangible one of stylistic influence. In Chateaubriand's descriptions of scenes of unviolated nature a Bartram coloring is at times unmistakable. The "charm" which the anonymous reviewer of the French translation of Bartram's *Travels* found in the book

<sup>10</sup> Chateaubriand, *Les Natchez*, publiés avec une Introduction et des Notes par Gilbert Chinard. The Johns Hopkins Press, 1932, p. 61.

did not, one may be sure, fail to impress Chateaubriand. "L'auteur," wrote the reviewer, "a su répandre sur ses promenades solitaires, un charme qui attache le lecteur à ses pas."<sup>11</sup> Bartram still travels "charmingly" in the pages of Chateaubriand.

*Other Continental Writers:*

No one has as yet studied the influence of Bartram on French literature generally or on German literature. Through Chateaubriand French writers became aware of the American landscape, and their own work in this direction often displays a strong Bartram coloring. German writers, too, through the work of Zimmermann, could not help being aware of Bartram's description of the American scene. That the influence of Bartram on the literature of France and Germany is likely to have been considerable is indicated by the wide interest in America in both countries and by the translations of Bartram's *Travels* into the languages of these countries. In fact, as Professor Lane Cooper has remarked, "it would not be surprising if careful search revealed an interesting set of transatlantic literary relations wherever this remarkable work found susceptible readers, say, in Holland, Germany, and Sweden also."<sup>12</sup> Such a careful study is a task in itself, and the preceding pages, it is hoped, strongly suggest that such an undertaking might prove fruitful.

<sup>11</sup> *La Clef du Cabinet des Souverains*, No. 733.

<sup>12</sup> *The Nation*, February 23, 1905, p. 152.

## CONCLUSION

The reasons for the impression that William Bartram has produced upon modern thought and literature may be summarized in one statement: once more the time and the man met. The *Travels* appeared at an auspicious moment, at a time when the movement vaguely called Romantic was rapidly spreading over most of Europe. Whatever else that movement—or series of movements, as it may more appropriately be called—represented, one of its definite characteristics was a quickened interest in nature and in anything that increased man's knowledge of nature. Bartram's vivid descriptions of so many strange and marvelous natural curiosities could not fail to attract the attention of a world become aware of the complexity and beauty of nature. In addition, America was still a strange and remote land, and especially the section described by Bartram—the Carolinas and the Floridas—and, therefore, wonderfully interesting. Three years before the appearance of his book in Philadelphia, an American friend studying in Europe urged him to publish the work there, for, he wrote, "Whatever regards the *Natural History* of America is particularly sought after; and everything that tends in the least to reflect any light on this interesting subject is purchased and read with avidity."<sup>1</sup>

When his *Travels* finally appeared in Europe it was discovered to be the work of—to use the late Professor Parrington's characterization—"A gentle, kindly spirit, animated by the genial philosophy of the times."<sup>2</sup> It was the work of a unique personality. Here spoke a lover of nature, one possessed of all the enthusiasm generally associated with Romanticism, but one who at the same time had the objective eyes of a scientist. Unlike the accounts of previous observers of the American scene, his was not concerned with utilitarian problems; it was not an inventory of resources but a picture of the landscape. Mary E.

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Benjamin S. Barton, dated at Edinburgh, February 19, 1788. *Bartram Papers*, I.

<sup>2</sup> Louis Vernon Parrington, *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Fourteenth ed.), I, 787.



Woolley has aptly characterized the work of Bartram's predecessors:

Travellers to the colonies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were fond of recording their experiences in the new country, but most of them confined their descriptions to the social, economic, political and religious characteristics, with an occasional digression into the fields of geography or natural history. If they spoke of the land, it was generally with reference to its productive capacity, the wheat or tobacco which a given region yielded. There were chapters devoted to the climate, the soil, rivers and navigation, but not scenery. Nor did many of them penetrate into the interior, where the wild scenery was to be found. But even those who braved the difficulties of inland discovery seem little impressed by anything save the horror and desolation of the region.<sup>3</sup>

Bartram's book even differed from those of Romantic writers, to whom nature is most frequently a refuge and an escape. Bartram visited strange, unknown regions not because he sought to escape from civilization, to forget love's sorrows, to find consolation, inspiration, or even God, but merely because he wanted to see, to observe, and to paint. The picture that Bartram offered to the world was accurate, clear, and new. Europe, interested in America and in nature, appreciated its simplicity, the unsophisticated vision it betrayed, and its exoticism. Scientists studied it and poets found it a source of inspiration and fresh imagery.

But Bartram's contribution must not be confined to the historical rôle it has played in the natural sciences and in the literature of the Romantics. It is in itself a genuine piece of literature. If his "expedition . . . to the South is one of the important events in botanical history, and his book among the classics in that science,"<sup>4</sup> the same expedition is one of the important events in literary history, and his book among the classics of nature description. Bartram's writing is the abiding expression—vivid and colorful—of a gifted personality, and a major contribution by an American to the literature of the world.

<sup>3</sup> "The Development of the Love of Romantic Scenery in America." *American Historical Review*, III (1897-98), 57.

<sup>4</sup> Peter J. Hamilton, *Colonial Mobile*, Boston, 1897, p. 243.

## APPENDIX

A LETTER FROM WILLIAM BARTRAM TO HIS NEPHEW DR.  
JAMES BARTRAM, SURGEON ON THE SHIP "GEORGE  
WASHINGTON," SAILING FROM PHILADELPHIA  
TO CAPE OF GOOD HOPE, BATAVIA,  
MADRAS, AND CALCUTTA.<sup>1</sup>

My worthy and Dear Nephew.

As thou art embarking on a long and distant journey, I take the liberty of communicating my sentiments, in such matters, as eventually may be of use and benefit. My age and experience prompt me to assume this office.

Fear and adore the Divinity.

Honour and revere thy parents, thy relatives and friends,  
regard and benefit every one when it is in thy power.

As human society is founded on subordination, do a rational homage to thy superiors; be social and friendly to every one, even to him that hath been thy adversary. But avoid the society of those who are *irreligious, immoral, and intemperate*. Yet render assistance, and acts of benevolence, even to those when in distress.

Respect the religion and laws of every Nation, that it may be thy fortune to be with; and never ridicule their religion and customs, for that can be of no advantage, besides placing thy understanding and good sense in a doubtfull point of view.

My dear James, although I have good reason to hope that thou art proof against the detestable practice of indulgence in the use of spiritous liquors; Yet as young company, and what is termed fashionable society, to youth hath a fascinating power and influence; be ever watchful and on thy guard, for be assured, that formidable enemy of youth, and the human race, privately seizes every opportunity, and favourable circumstance, to entrap the unwary sons of men.

Be honest and frugal, yet magnanimously liberal, as thy circumstance may authorize. Be charitable, and always be foremost to administer relief to the poor and distressed.

Guard the *honour of women*, and never join in the low witty remarks of the ill bred coxcomb to turn into ridicule of the sex some natural foibles, from the conduct of a few weak deluded creatures; who very

<sup>1</sup> See footnote p. 33.

likely have been seduced, from a happy state of inosence by some unprincipled *rake*.

Esteem and respect the Captain. He is sovereign, and absolute commander of your community during the voyage, and besides the advantage it will afford thee on the voyage; his countenance and friendships on land will be a powerful recommendation. I conjure thee, under no circumstance, take any part against him. But on the contrary if any dissension should take place on board, between the commander and crew, take part with the Captain, or be quiet.

Do thy duty as surgeon, of the ship, and always be ready to render any service in the community, particularly at the request of the Captain. Let it be ever so mean *Wisdom*, saith Humility, comes before honour.

Forget not thyself in the moment of recreation and joy; look at thyself, thy own figure, as it were in a mirror standing before thee: I say my beloved Nephew, dishonour not that figure and the family of thy father. But ever have it in view to add lustre to the name of thy family. Remember that line of the Poet, which thee pointed out to me as beautiful.

“ Hills peep o’er Hills, and Alps on Alps arise.”

Be cool and temperate in conversation and debate on every subject, and shew deference and submission to thy *superior*; and to *old people*; rather affect ignorance, and a desire of information. For this will show thy good breeding, draw forth usefull knowledge, and procure friends and admirers.

This far, my dear friend and nephew, I have presumed to give thee my sentiments and advice, on moral conduct, not because I suppose thee ignorant, but by way of admonition, during our separation, when thee may want a friend.

Now I shall offer a few remarks concerning thy views, and occupations, economy, health, etc. If you would be favoured with a prosperous and pleasant voyage and peacable sociable and friendly community Thee will have much time at thy own disposal which I would recommend to be devoted to philosophic observations, and study; Particularly physick and surgery. Which thee knows is thy proper profession.

So long a voyage through various temperate and Southern climates, is favourable for observation, and study of Natural history which comprehends Zoology and Botany, not only the product of seas but of land when thee arrives there will furnish amusement, and profitable exercise to thy mind.

On thy arrival in the hot southern climates, be careful not to make

too free use of their delicious fruits, especially soon after thy arrival. I beg likewise that thee would be very cautious, and abstemious in the use of spiritous liquor and strong and heating wines. Since they are known to excite the most dangerous fevers. In hot climates let thy common drink be good water. It may be well to consult Dr. Horsefield when thee arrives at Batavia, concerning the best regimen. To whom be pleased to present my high regard and esteem—

Now farewell,

I pray God keep thee from all evil.—

P. S. My dear James fear and adore God.

Thy Unkle William Bartram.

Pennsylvania, Septr. 23d, 1804.





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